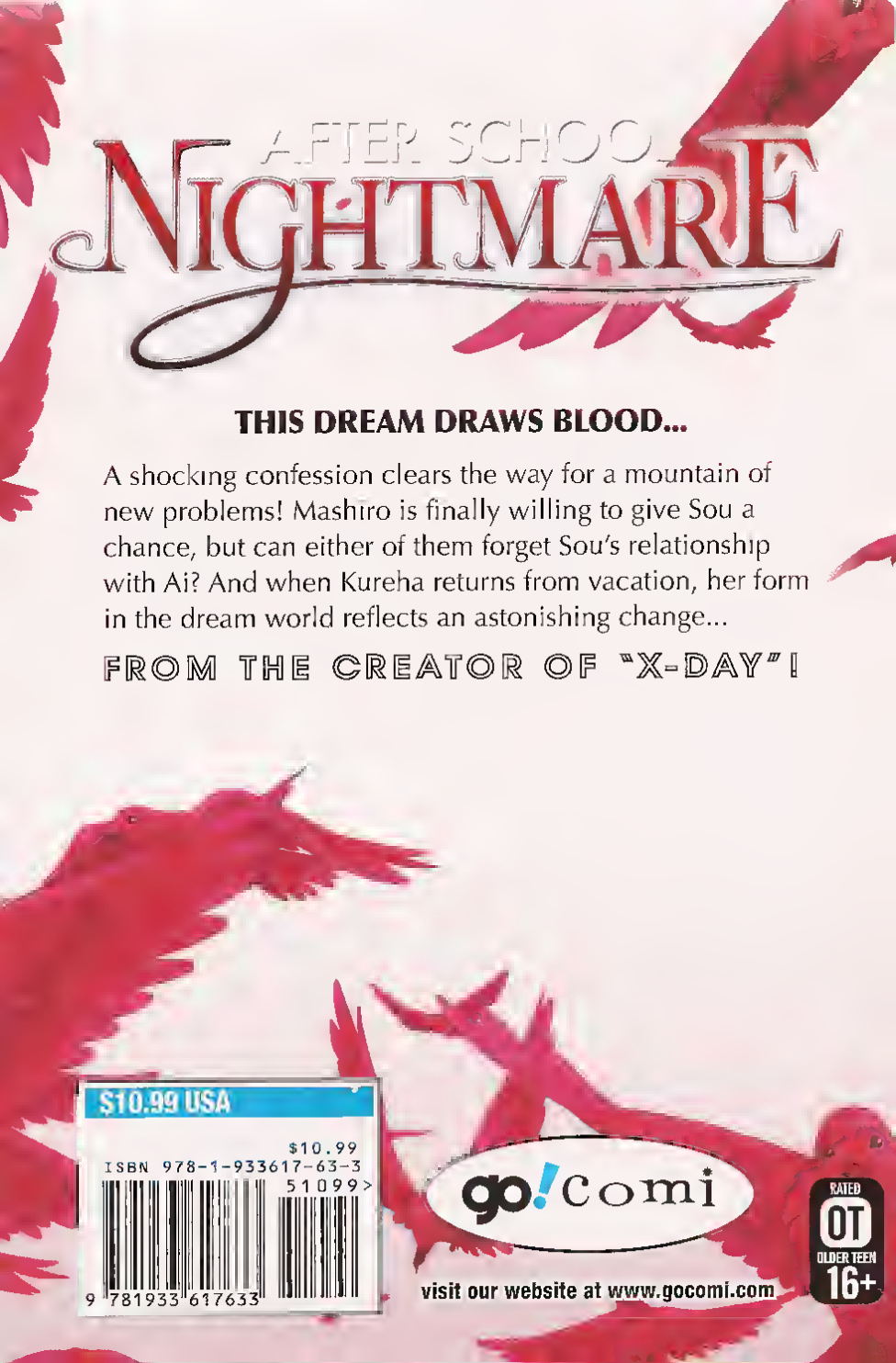
AFTER SCHOOL NIGHTMARE

8

SETONA MIZUSHIRO



THIS DREAM DRAWS BLOOD...

A shocking confession clears the way for a mountain of new problems! Mashiro is finally willing to give Sou a chance, but can either of them forget Sou's relationship with Ai? And when Kureha returns from vacation, her form in the dream world reflects an astonishing change...

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Our Story So Far

Mashiro Ichijo is a high school student whose body is half female, and half male. One day, he's called down to a secret infirmary to participate in a "special class" he needs to graduate. He learns from another student, Kureha, that each person takes on their true form in this class. When each student reaches their personal goal, their most heart-felt dream will come true. Mashiro decides to use this class to become a true male.

But when another dreamer – a merciless knight – exposes his body's secret and Kureha's tragic past, Mashiro vows to protect the weaker dreamers.

Who is the real person behind the knight? While trying to identify the real people behind the facades, Mashiro is accosted by Sou, a male student he doesn't much like. Sou tells him "you're a girl" and then forces a kiss upon him. Wondering whether Sou could be another dreamer, maybe even the knight, Mashiro becomes obsessed with Sou.

But when Sou's sister, Ai, reveals that Sou is the knight, Mashiro is stunned. Vowing that he'll never forgive Sou, Mashiro tries to free himself from his confused feelings by spending a tender night with Kureha.

Soon, Kureha tells him she wants to break up now that she sees what is really in his heart, and returns to her parents' house.

At the end of his rope, Mashiro finally confesses to Sou that he loves him, but what does that really mean...!?

Participants in the Class
If you get a hold of the key, you can graduate
Every time your heart takes damage, a bead on the cord breaks. When all three break, you are eliminated from the dream
Ai Mizuhashi

KUREHA.
ARE YOU STILL ASLEEP?
HONEY, ARE YOU SICK?
KUREHA...?

THINK ABOUT...
...WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.
YOU KNOW WHO I REALLY AM.
DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD.
CAN YOU HONESTLY LOVE SOMEONE THROUGH SUCH THICK ARMOR?
EVERYONE HAS A PAST...
...AND EXPERIENCES THEY'D RATHER NOT SHARE.
.....
.....

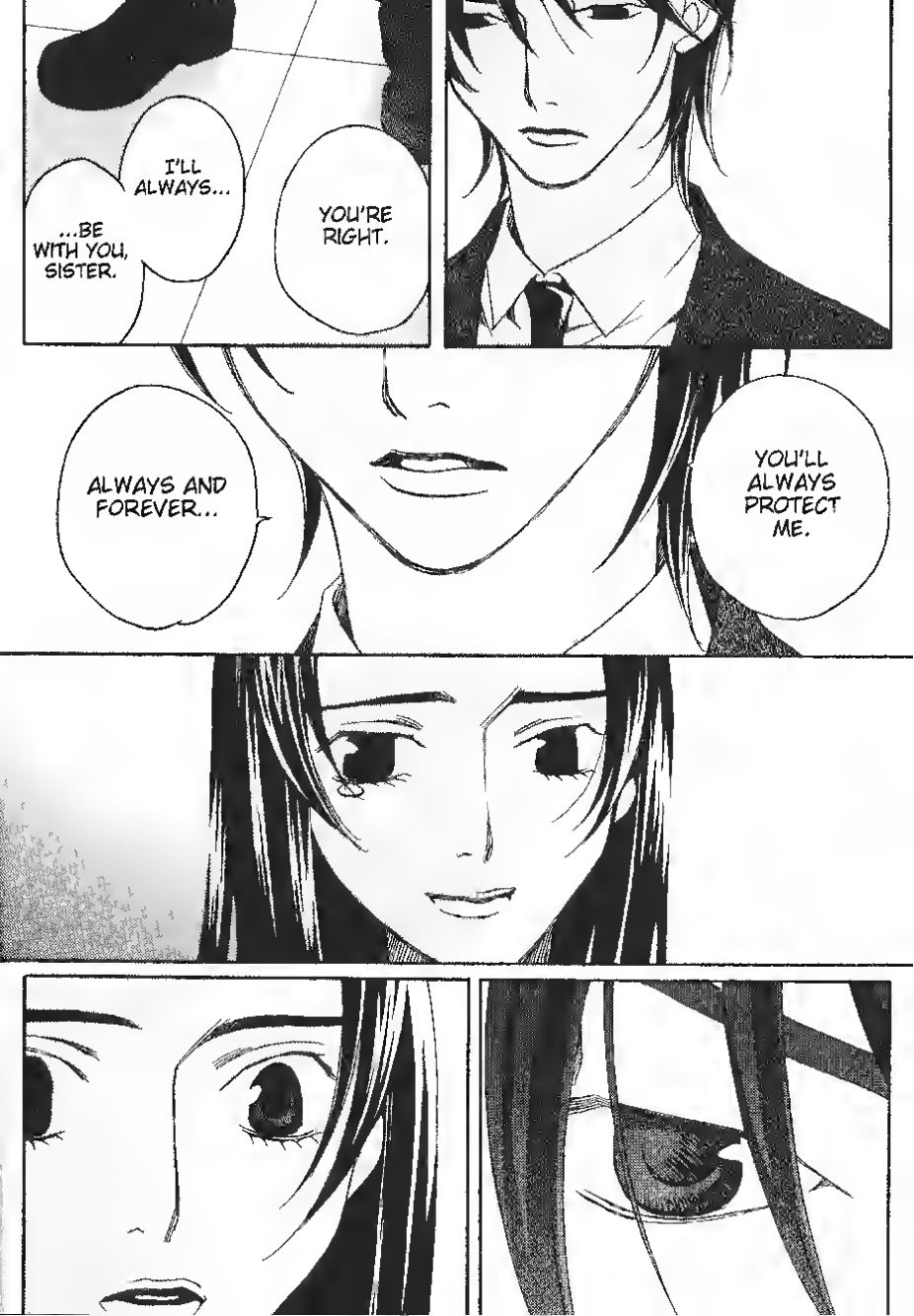
WHAT I SEE OUT HERE IS REAL, TOO.
THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S ALL YOU ARE.
...I'M JUST TAKING WORDS FROM KUREHA, BUT...
...MAYBE...
AND...
...CAN'T HATE YOU, EVEN WHEN I SEE YOUR DARKEST SIDE.
I...
I KNOW THAT'S SOMETHING COMING FROM THE PRINCE OF HYPOCRISY, BUT...
I FORGIVE YOU.

I ACCEPT IT.
AND...IF I JUST KNEW WHY...
AND KNEW YOU WANTED TO CHANGE IT, THEN...
...MAYBE I COULD HELP YOU.
IF YOU DON'T WANT MY HELP, I WON'T DO ANYTHING.
I'M FINE WITH THAT, TOO.
EVEN IF YOU DON'T CHANGE...
...I'LL STILL ACCEPT YOU.

NO MATTER WHICH SOU YOU ARE...
...AS LONG AS YOU'RE REAL, I'M FINE.
SO, SOU...
...SOU...

.....
HE'S SAYING HE'S FINE WITH THE KNIGHT...
AND THAT HE'LL ACCEPT ME NO MATTER WHAT...

HE'S JUST A CHILD TRYING TO LIVE A DREAM. DIDN'T YOU HATE THAT ABOUT HIM?
WORDS ARE MEANINGLESS, SOU.
THEN... WHAT SHOULD I DO?
YOU DON'T WANT THAT. YOU WERE TRYING SO HARD TO KEEP HIM AT A DISTANCE, REMEMBER!?
IF YOU LISTEN TO HIM, YOU'LL ONLY GET HURT, AGAIN.
I'D DO ANYTHING TO KEEP US TOGETHER, SOU.
YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE ME, NO MATTER WHAT.
OKAY?
OKAY...!?
I'LL WATCH AFTER YOU, SOU.
STAY WITH ME.


I'LL ALWAYS...
...BE WITH YOU, SISTER.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
YOU'LL ALWAYS PROTECT ME.
ALWAYS AND FOREVER...

I WOULD RATHER DIE!

PLIP
PLIP
SNIFFLE
WHAT'RE YOU CRYING ABOUT?
WHAT'S ALL THIS?

MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE...
...TRIED TO BE CUTER.
I WAS JUST THINKING ...
IF...
IF I HAD TO MAKE THAT POINT...
...MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE SAID "THE PRINCESS OF HYPOCRISY"...
...IN-STEAD.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. THAT'S HOW IT IS...
IF YOU'D SUDDENLY STARTED TALKING LIKE A GIRL, I WOULDN'T KNOW HOW TO REACT.
SNIFFLE
MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE WORN...
...THIS UNIFORM.
SNIFFLE
IT DOESN'T MATTER! YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE!

SOB
SOB
SOB
YES, I DO! I HAVE ONE! I HAVE A GIRL'S UNIFORM! MY FRIEND GAVE IT TO ME!!
I THOUGHT ABOUT PUTTING IT ON, AND MAYBE SHOWING IT TO YOU, AND ○△×※☆◎§...!
OKAY, OKAY! I CAN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND YOU, ANYMORE!
SOB
SOB
THAT'S ENOUGH, ALREADY ...
.....
GET UP.
GIRLS SHOULDN'T SIT LIKE THAT...

STOP IT.

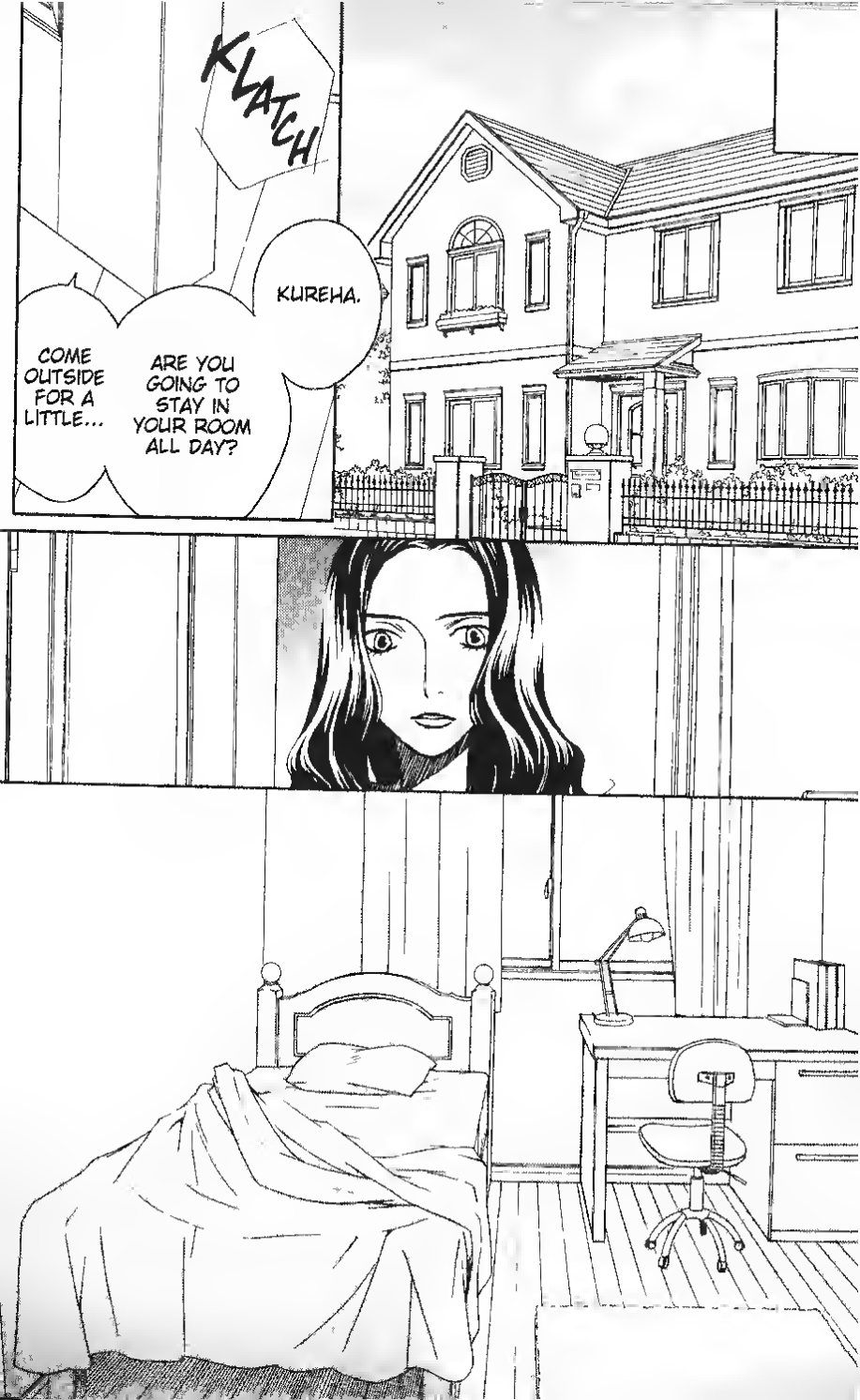
SOU...
.....

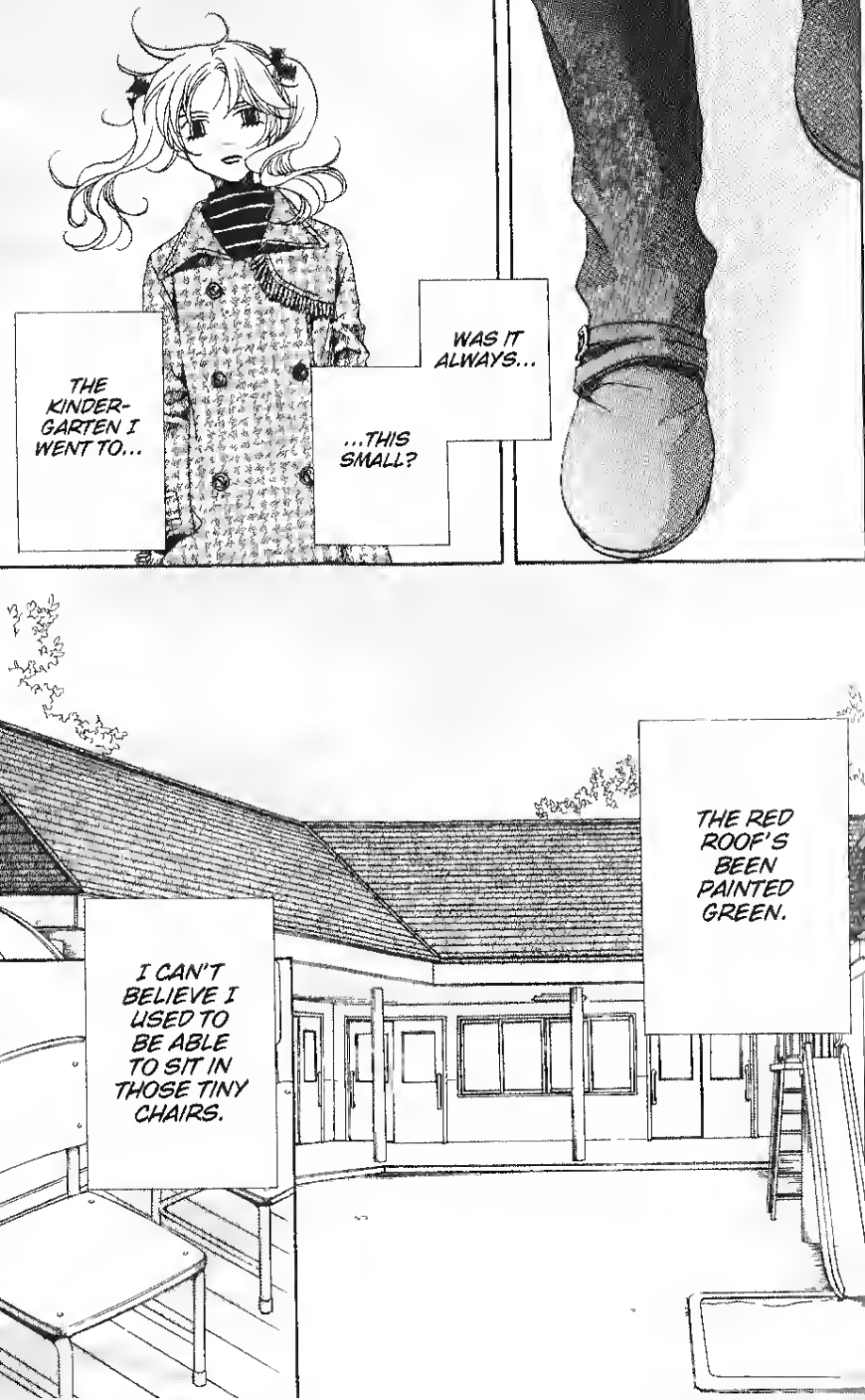
WHEN OUR TEETH CLASHED...
...I ALMOST WANTED TO LAUGH.
SOU...
THERE ARE A MILLION THINGS I WANT TO ASK YOU.
BUT, RIGHT NOW...

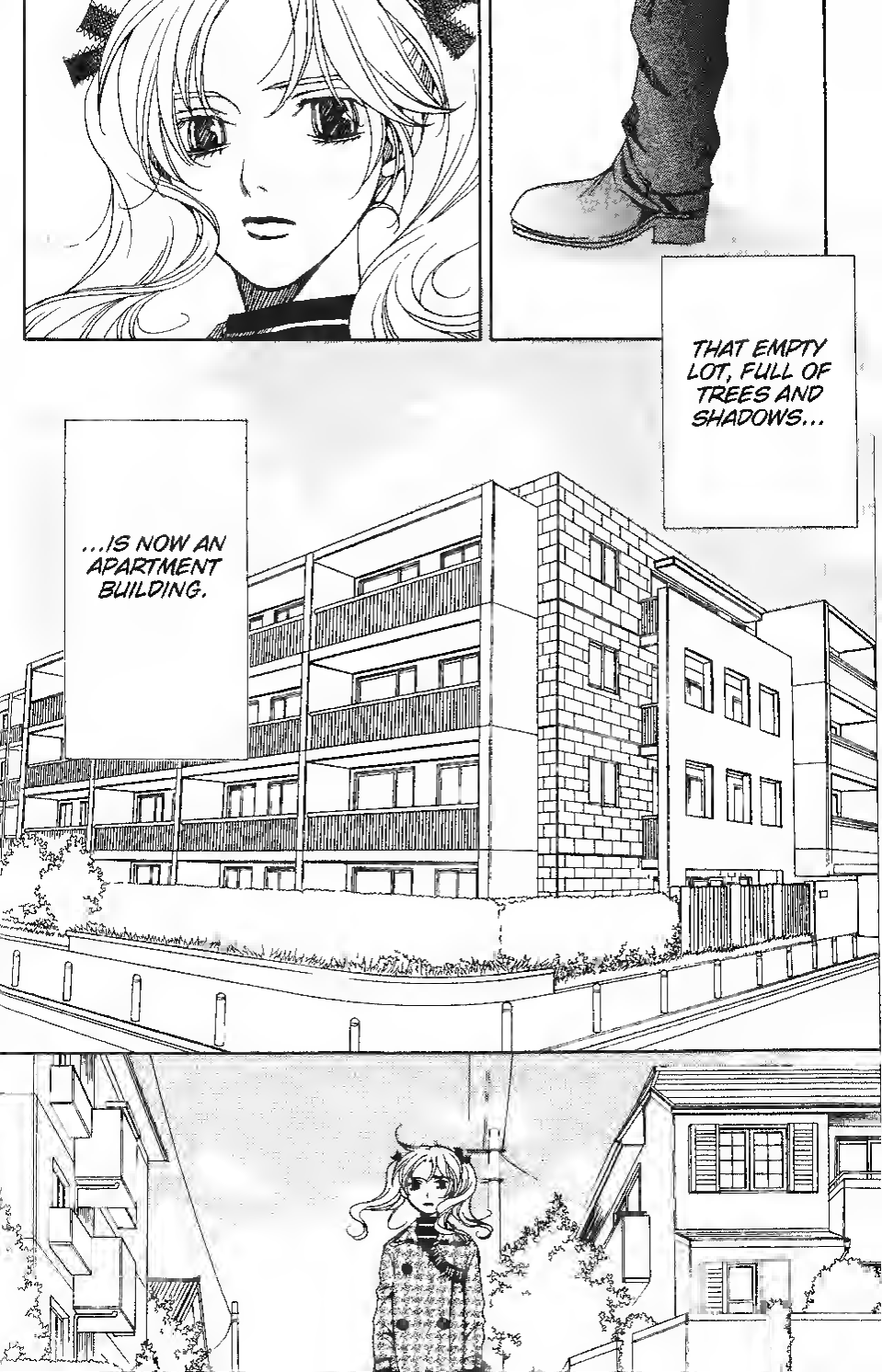
RIGHT NOW, I JUST DON'T CARE.
CREAK!!

I WOULD RATHER DIE!

I FINALLY SAID IT...

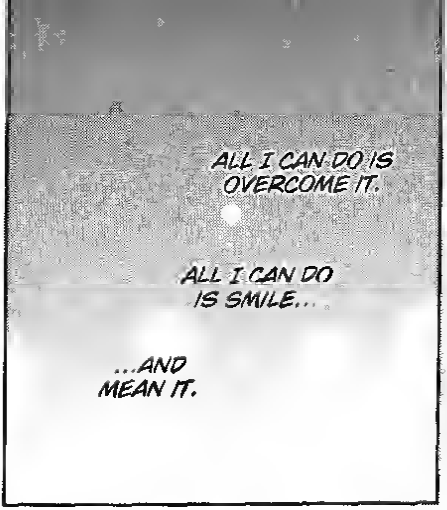

KLATCH
KUREHA.
ARE YOU GOING TO STAY IN YOUR ROOM ALL DAY?
COME OUTSIDE FOR A LITTLE...

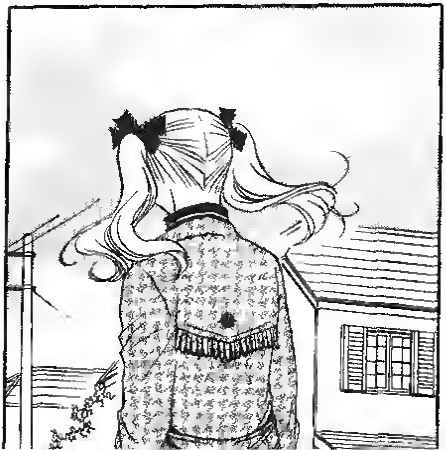

THE KINDER-GARTEN I WENT TO...
WAS IT ALWAYS...
...THIS SMALL?
THE RED ROOF'S BEEN PAINTED GREEN.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I USED TO BE ABLE TO SIT IN THOSE TINY CHAIRS.


THAT EMPTY LOT, FULL OF TREES AND SHADOWS...
...IS NOW AN APARTMENT BUILDING.

EVERYTHING CHANGES.

FOR BETTER OR WORSE...
...THERE'S NO STOPPING IT.
IF IT'S REALLY REVENGE I WANT...
IF I REALLY WANT TO CONQUER EVERYTHING THAT'S EVER HURT ME...

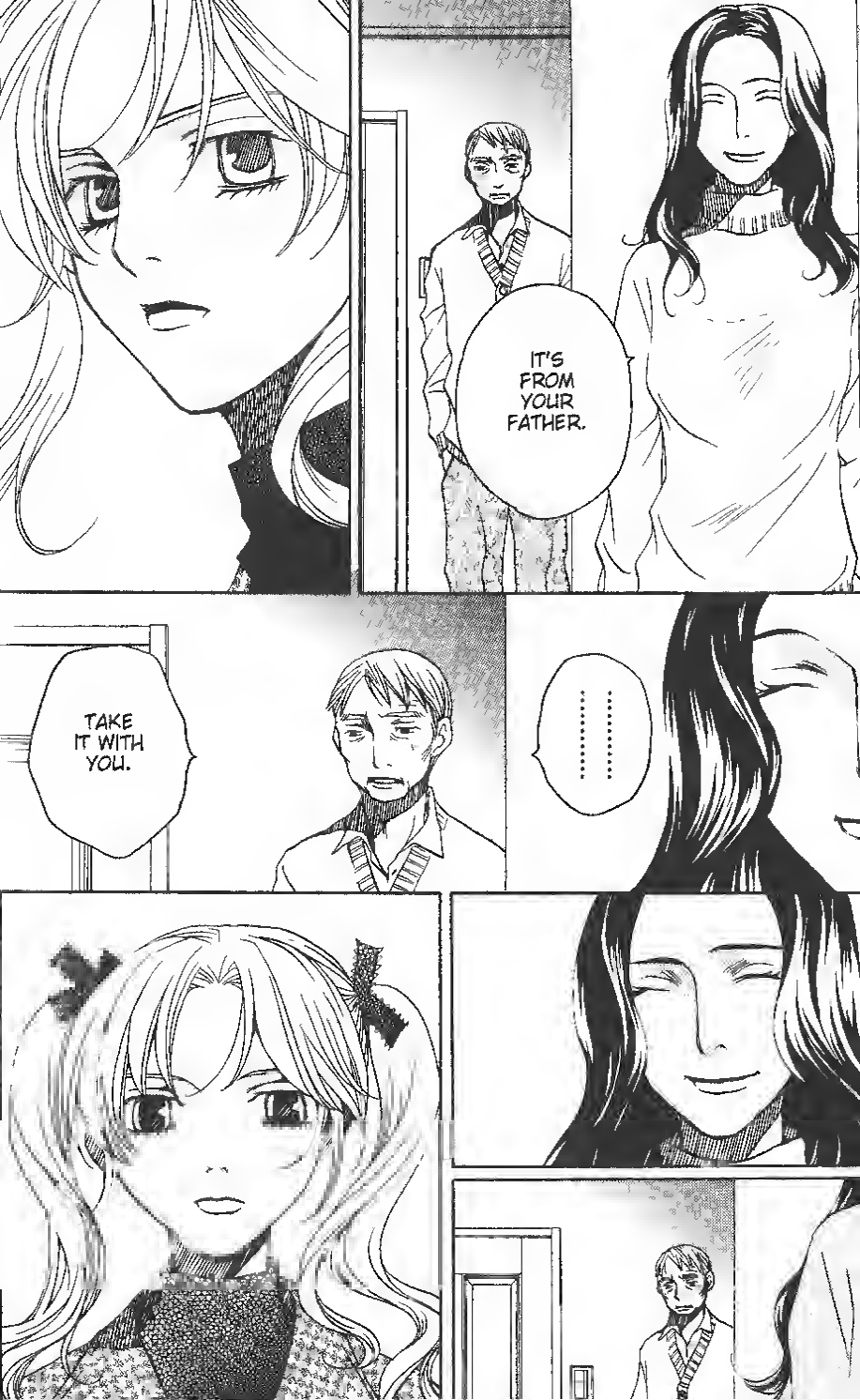




...ALL I CAN DO NOW IS BE HAPPY.

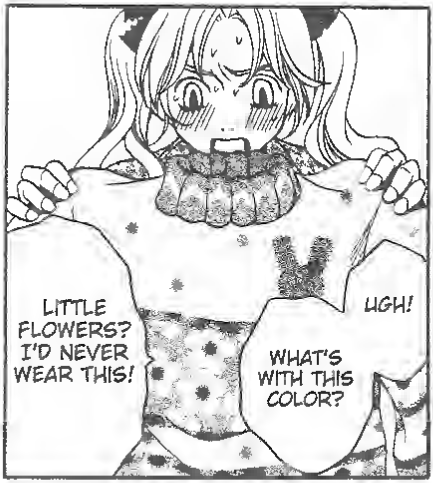
WHAT? YOU'RE GOING BACK TO SCHOOL, ALREADY?
WE HARDLY GOT TO SEE YOU.
I KNOW! SWEETS! I'LL GET YOU SOME SWEETS TO TAKE BACK WITH YOU!
Thanks
IT WAS NICE TO RELAX HERE FOR A WHILE.
GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR JOB, MOM.
...OH.
HEY, THAT'S HIROKO MIZUHASHI-SAN'S BOOK.

Boasting~
REALLY!?
HE'S MY FRIEND, AND WE EAT LUNCH TOGETHER.
HER SON GOES TO MY SCHOOL.
I JUST HAD TO GET A COPY. I'M A FLORIST, TOO. ♡
OOOH ...
I USE IT AS REFERENCE FOR MY DISPLAYS.
IS HE ANYTHING LIKE HER? I BET HE'S HANDSOME.
ERR, YEAH.
THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION.
I THINK HE'S A GOOD GUY.
YEAH?
WELL, SEND HIM MY REGARDS.
RE-GARDS FOR WHAT?
HUH?
WHAT THE...? I DIDN'T BRING THAT WITH ME.
OH, THAT?


IT'S FROM YOUR FATHER.
TAKE IT WITH YOU.
.....

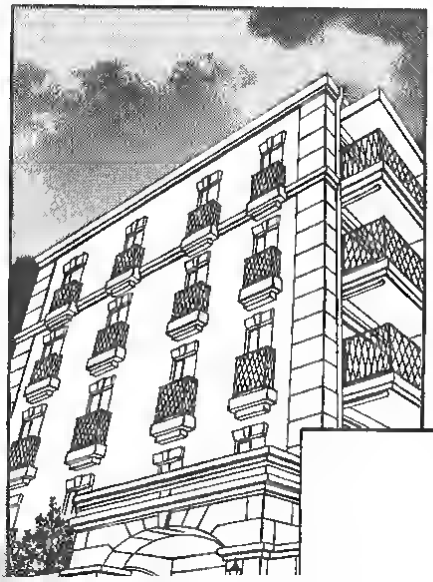
THANKS.

GOODBYE.



I'D ALWAYS THOUGHT I WANTED TO BE A GUY.

I LOOKED UP TO THEM. WATCHED THEM FROM AFAR.

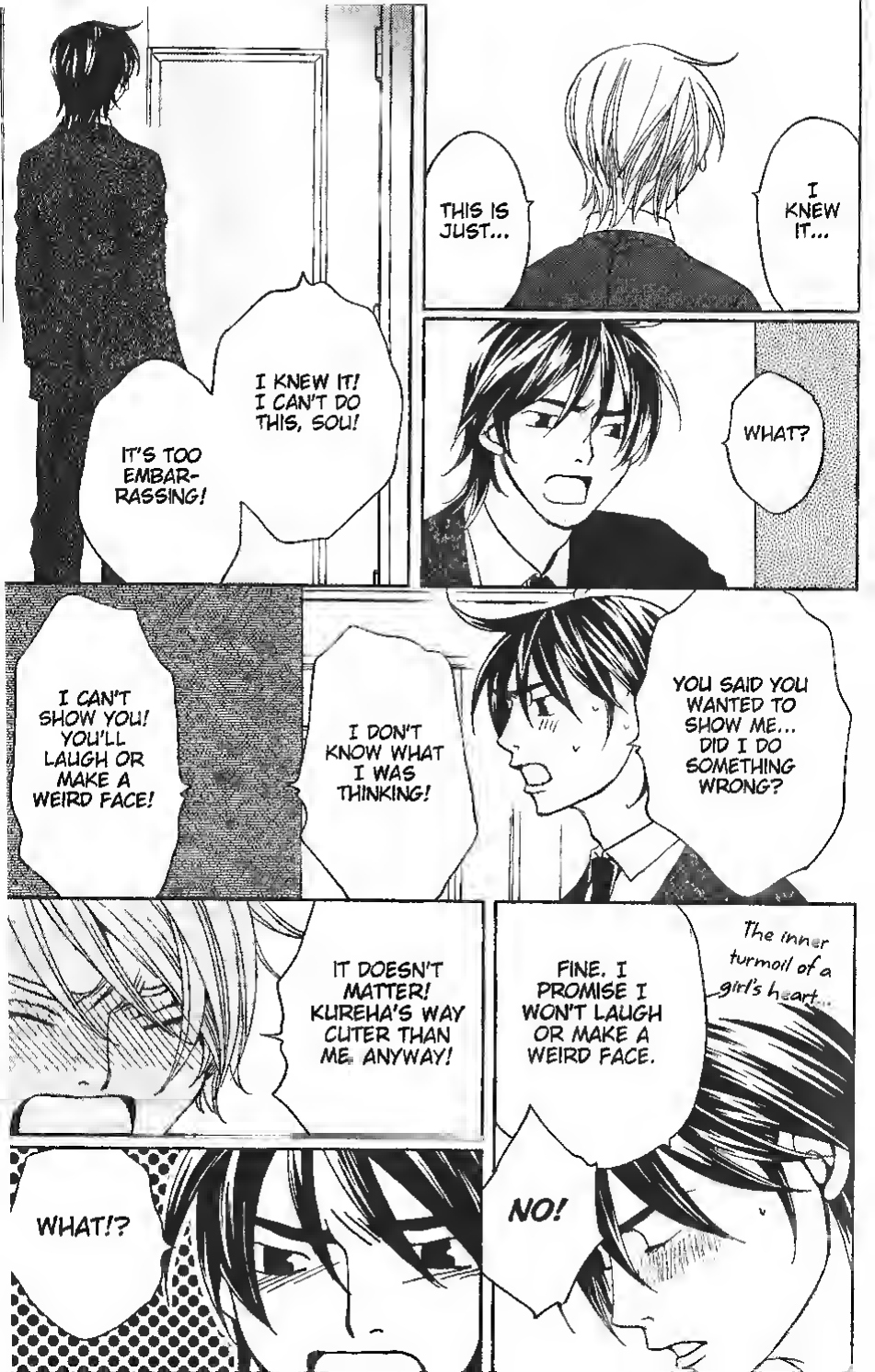


STRONGER.
MORE EXPANSIVE.
I THOUGHT THE WORLD GUYS LIVED IN WAS FAR MORE BEAUTIFUL.
I THOUGHT IT WAS FULL OF OPPORTUNITIES.
BUT DREAMS HAVE NO SUBSTANCE...
I WAS DREAMING.
SO, IT FELT BEAUTIFUL TO ME.

I NEVER WANTED TO BE A GIRL.
THERE WAS NOTHING TO ADMIRE ABOUT IT.
I SAW NOTHING BUT PROBLEMS AND HURT.
I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE THAT DREAM.
...I KNEW I WAS A GIRL.
MAYBE BECAUSE, SOMEWHERE IN MY HEART...

NO!
I BLAMED EVERYTHING I DIDN'T LIKE ABOUT MYSELF...
...ON THAT.
I'M SURE THAT WHAT I'M LOSING RIGHT NOW...
...ONLY LOOKS BRILLIANT AND BEAUTIFUL.
NO!
DON'T FORGET ME!

KNOCK
UM...
YOU DONE YET?
NOT TO RUSH YOU, BUT...
...DOES IT ALWAYS TAKE YOU THIS LONG TO GET DRESSED?
.....


I KNEW IT! I CAN'T DO THIS, SOU!
IT'S TOO EMBAR-RASSING!
THIS IS JUST...
I KNEW IT...
WHAT?
I CAN'T SHOW YOU! YOU'LL LAUGH OR MAKE A WEIRD FACE!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WAS THINKING!
YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO SHOW ME... DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?
IT DOESN'T MATTER! KUREHA'S WAY CUTER THAN ME, ANYWAY!
FINE. I PROMISE I WON'T LAUGH OR MAKE A WEIRD FACE.
The inner turmoil of a girl's heart...
WHAT!?
NO!

YOU KISSED HER, DIDN'T YOU!?
YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH HER, AREN'T YOU!?
DON'T START WITH THAT...
FUJISHI-MA...
I'M NOT SAYING "JUST."
SHE'S A VERY IMPORTANT FRIEND.
I'M WORRIED SICK ABOUT HER.
I'M THE ONE WHO'S WORRIED SICK! THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM, HERE!
THEN WHY'D YOU BRING IT UP!?
FUJISHI-MA...
...IS A FRIEND.
Here it comes
OH, HOW CONVENIENT. SO NOW YOU'RE SAYING SHE'S "JUST A FRIEND."
SOU, TELL ME THE TRUTH!
YOU THINK KUREHA'S CUTER THAN ME, DON'T YOU!?

HE'S TAKING SO LONG TO ANSWER!!
NO, LOOK...
WELL, FINE! I DON'T CARE!
I GET IT.
.....
.....
Ichijo is like a penguin. I guess? Tall and resolute as he stares straight ahead—
I wonder what he's looking at... the cute little thing
Sometimes she throws walnuts at me
Fujishima's like a hot-tempered squirrel
SQUEAK!
SQUEAK!
Ouch! Aaw, how cute...
YOU AND KUREHA ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
THERE'S NO WAY TO EVEN COMPARE YOU.
.....
AND JUST FOR THE RECORD, THIS WHOLE FISHING FOR COMPLIMENTS ACT IS THE GIRLIEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN!!
NOT ALL GIRLS ARE CUTE AND BRIGHT AND FLUFFY!
SORRY I'M NOT ALL CUTE AND BRIGHT AND FLUFFY! SORRY I'M NOTHING LIKE A GIRL!!
WELL, SORRY FOR BEING INCOMPARABLE!

YOUR SISTER...
.....
AI-SAN...
...IS REALLY BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T SHE?
I'M... NOTHING LIKE HER.
I COULD NEVER BE LIKE HER-
I THOUGHT YOU HATED HER.
I THOUGHT...
...SHE MADE YOU SICK.

I THINK SO.
NOW, IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO YELL AT ME ABOUT?
...I'M SORRY.
.....
WELL, THEN.
I'M GOING BACK TO MY ROOM.
HUH?
IF YOU REALLY DON'T WANT ME TO SEE, I WON'T LOOK.
LATER.
WAIT!

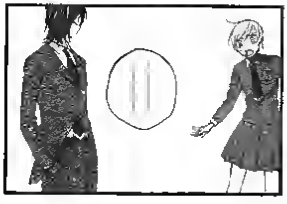
BURST
REAL MEN DON'T RUN AWAY LIKE THAT!
HOW DARE YOU JUST WALK AWAY WHEN SOMEONE'S HAVING A CRISIS!
A case of the North Wind and the Sun*?
.....
*SEE TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

!!
I MEAN...
...THERE'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF.
THERE, SEE? WAS THAT REALLY WORTH ALL THE WHINING?
.....
...LOOKS GOOD ON YOU.
IT...
WHA ...!?
I'M JUST AS NERVOUS AS YOU ARE. CUT ME SOME SLACK!
SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW.
HUH?
SLAM
NA
WELL...
I'M GOING NOW.

hahaha!
SOU'S SUCH A KID, SOMETIMES!
SHEESH, I WISH KUROSAKI-SEMPAI WOULD TEACH HIM SOME COMPOSURE!
FLOP
WHAT WAS THAT REACTION?
Chapter 29 / OVER

Translator's Notes:

Pg. 46 – *The North Wind and the Sun*
This tale by Aesop is about the wind and the sun having a contest to decide which is more effective: brute strength or gentle coaxing. The challenge is to get a man to take his coat off. The wind tries to blow it off with a raging wind, only making the man grip it tighter. The sun gently warms the earth until it's hot enough for the man to take it off willingly. In this scene, Sou's quiet withdrawal pulled Mashiro out better than any nagging would have done.



Pg. 65 - *Tobishima and Sakurai*
More color names.
鳶島 (Tobishima) The first symbol "tobi" means "black."
桜井 (Sakurai) The first symbol "sakura" means "cherry blossom," a light pink.

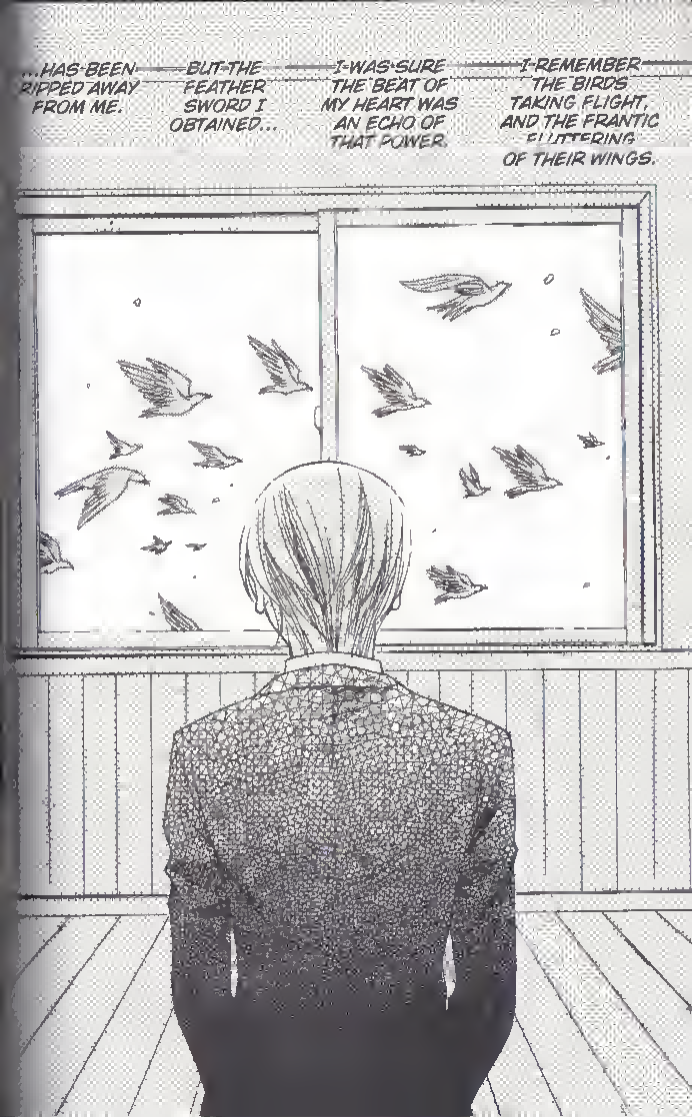
Pg. 70 – *Ebizawa*
Another color name.
海老沢 The first two symbols make up the word "ebi" which means "shrimp," a pinkish orange shade.

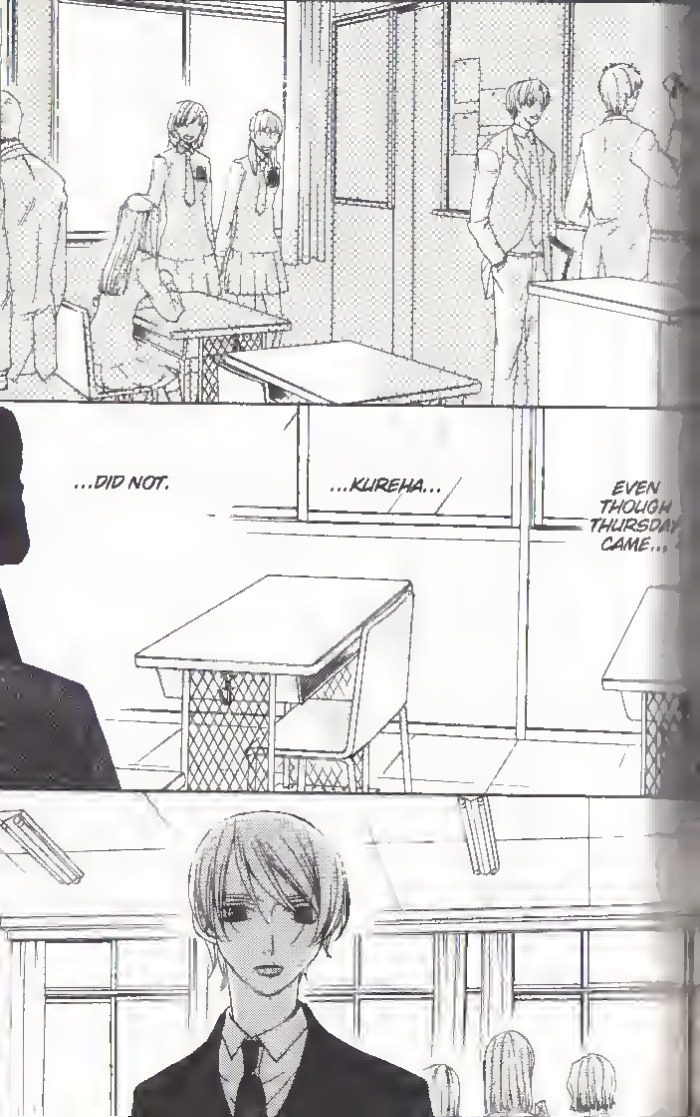
Pg. 122 – *Kanisawa*
蟹沢 The first symbol of this name means "crab." Mashiro messed it up because he easily confused "shrimp" for "crab."

Pg. 150 – *Haijima*
灰島 The first symbol "hai" means "ash," a gray color.

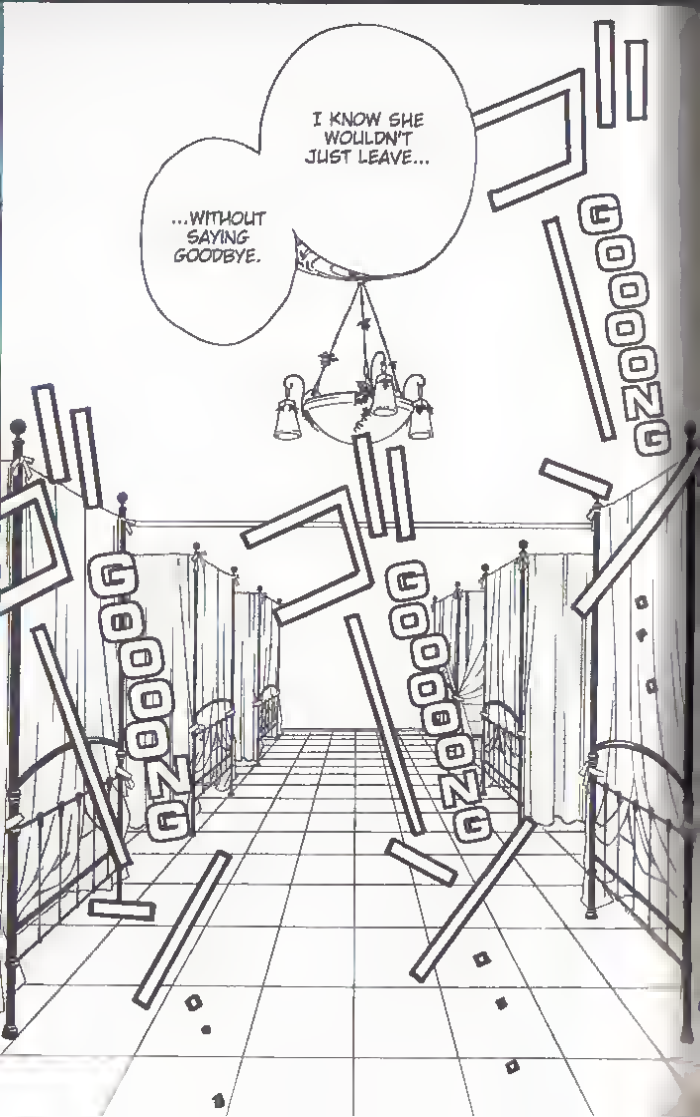
After School Nightmare
Scanner:Im_m
Editor:askani

JOAN OF ARC DEVOTED HER HEART AND SOUL TO THE CORONATION OF CHARLES VII.
ON THE BATTLEFIELD, SHE WAVED HIS FLAG ON THE FRONT LINES.


...HAS BEEN RIPPED AWAY FROM ME.
BUT THE FEATHER SWORD I OBTAINED...
I WAS SURE THE BEAT OF MY HEART WAS AN ECHO OF THAT POWER.
I REMEMBER THE BIRDS TAKING FLIGHT, AND THE FRANTIC FLUTTERING OF THEIR WINGS.


...DID NOT.
...KUREHA...
EVEN THOUGH THURSDAY CAME...

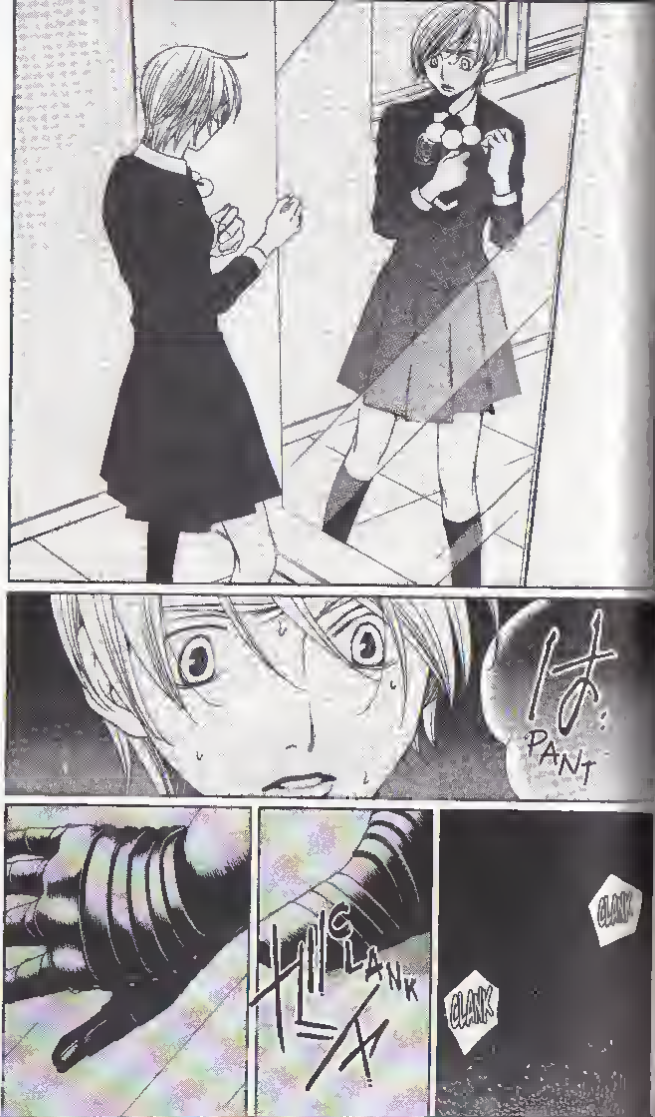
SHE'S ALREADY MISSED TWO CLASSES.
IF SHE DOESN'T COME TODAY...
...SHE'LL...
SHE'LL COME TO CLASS TODAY
I KNOW IT.
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT FUJISHIMA...
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
DID SHE CALL YOU?
NO.
QUITE THE OPPOSITE
I KNOW BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T.

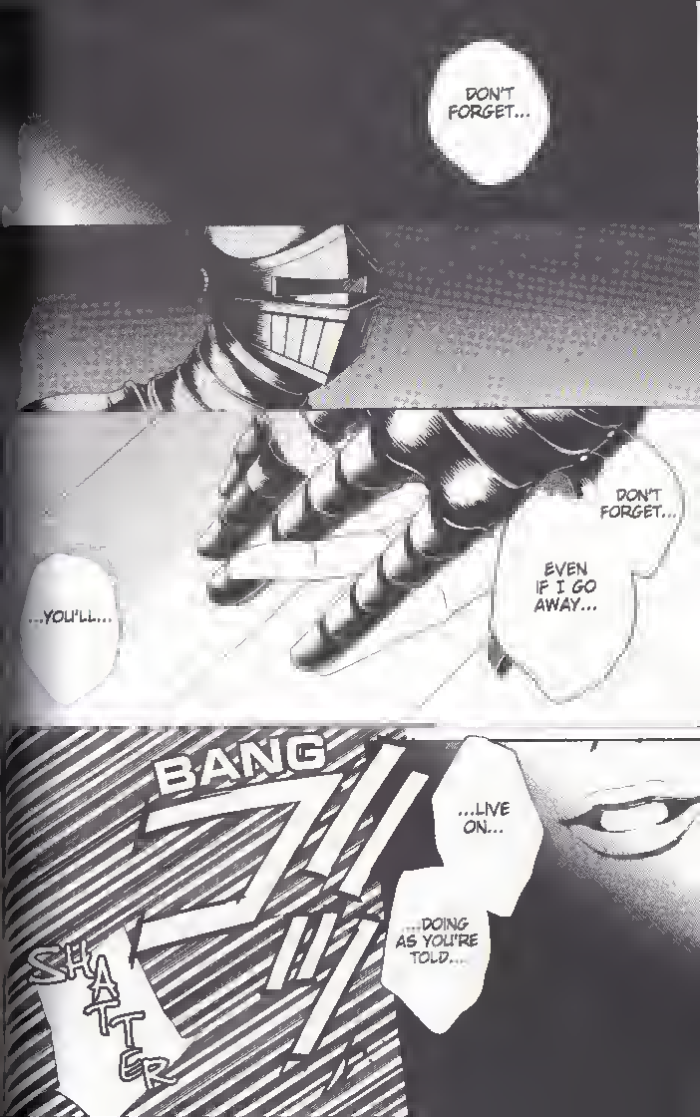

I KNOW SHE WOULDN'T JUST LEAVE...
...WITHOUT SAYING GOODBYE.
GOOOONG
GOOOONG
GOOOONG
GOOOONG

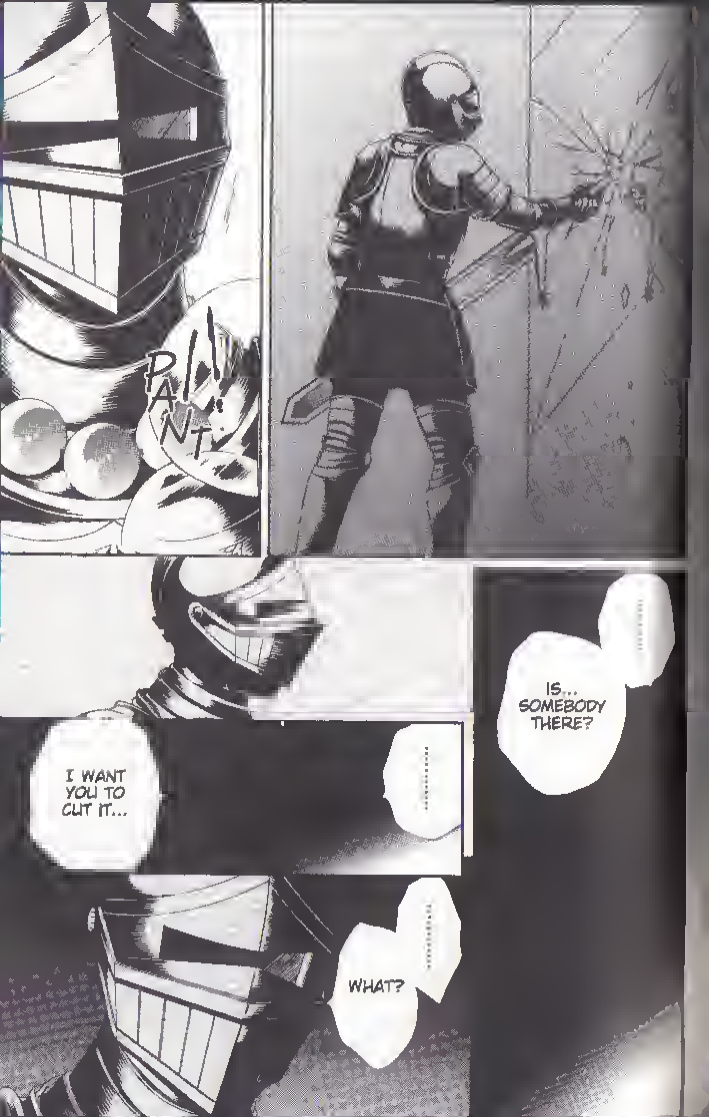
WHERE...AM I?
IT'S DARK...
I CAN'T SEE ANY-THING...

THADUMP..
GRAB
!!
...IS COMPLETELY FEMALE...
MY BODY..

GIVE IT BACK!
YOU'LL REGRET THIS...!
NO!

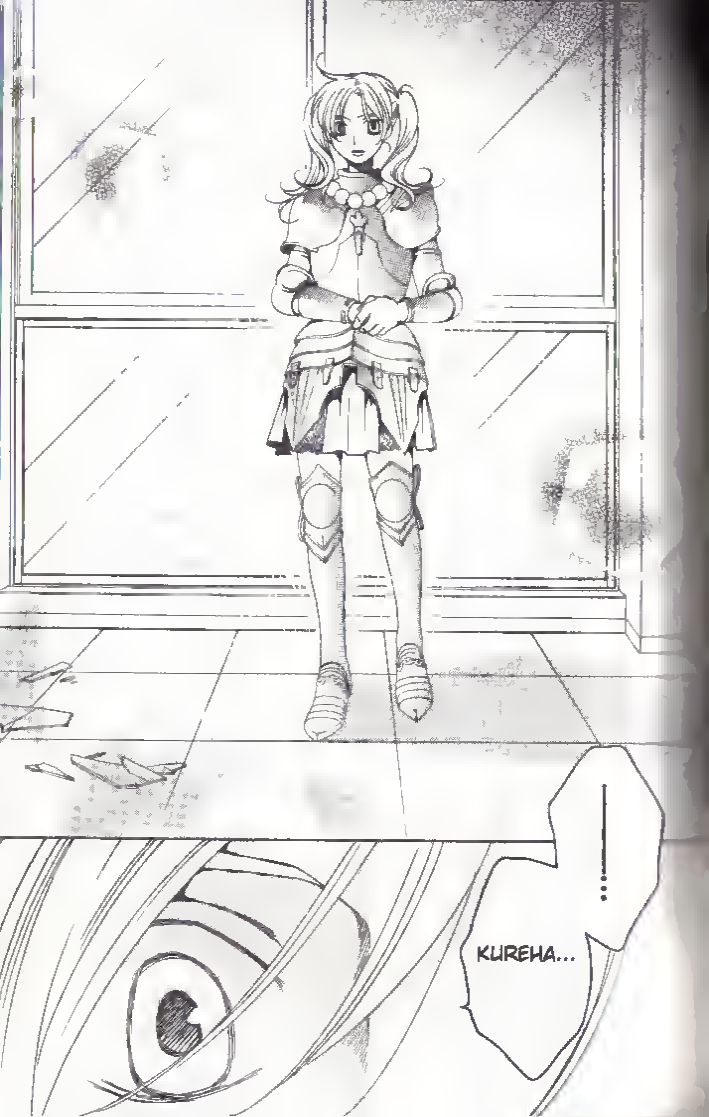

は：
PANT
CLANK
CLANK
CLANK

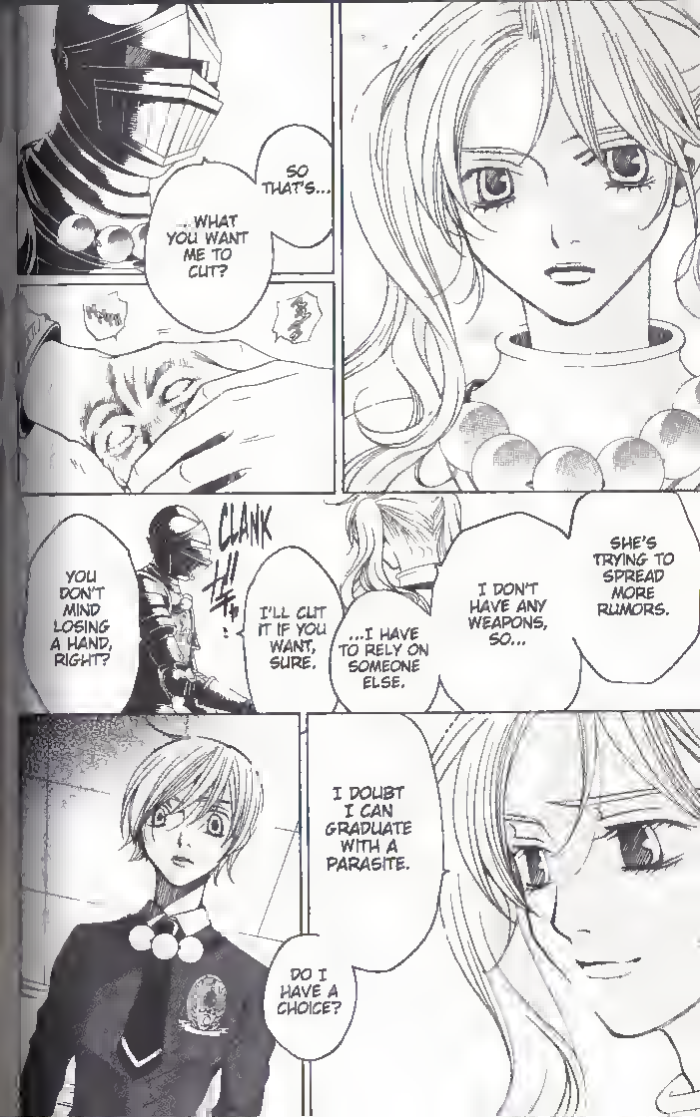

DON'T FORGET...
DON'T FORGET...
EVEN IF I GO AWAY...
...YOU'LL...
BANG
SHATTER
...LIVE ON...
...DOING AS YOU'RE TOLD...


PANT
IS... SOMEBODY THERE?
.....
I WANT YOU TO CUT IT...
.....
WHAT?
.....

I CAN'T.
..HOLD IT FOREVER.
I WANT YOU TO CUT IT OFF.
IT'S TOO DARK TO SEE.
CLANK
CLANK
CLANK
THERE'S SOMEBODY HERE!
WHO'S DOWN THERE!?
CLANK

CRASH
WHO...?
SOU?
CRASH


KUREHA...

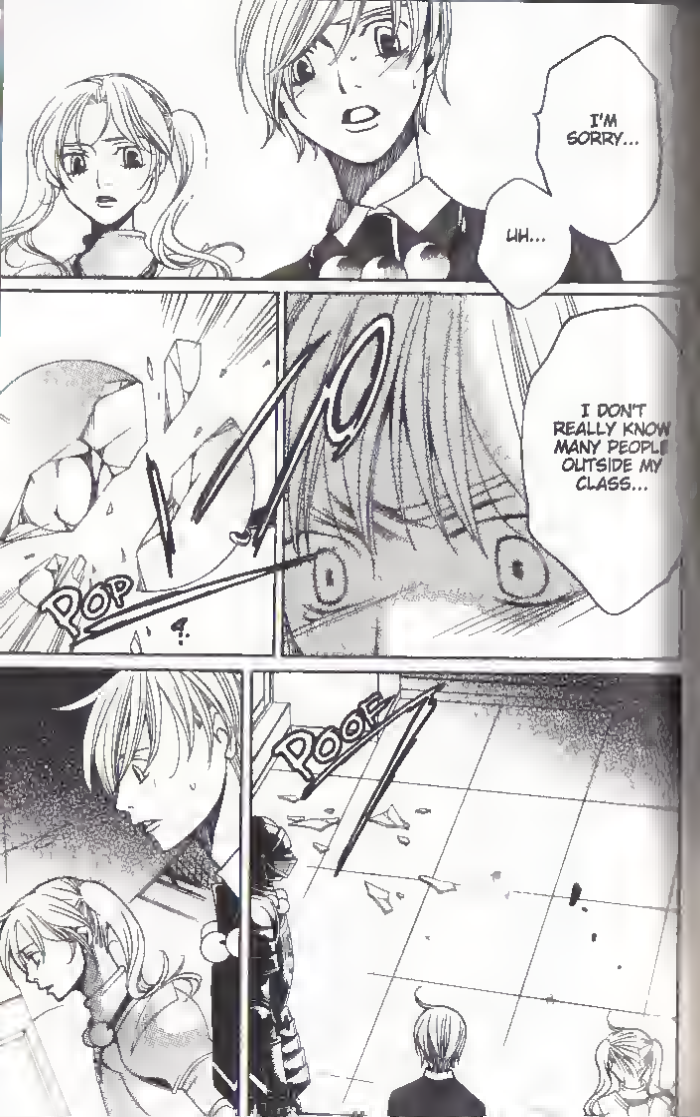

SO THAT'S...
...WHAT YOU WANT ME TO CUT?
CLANK
YOU DON'T MIND LOSING A HAND, RIGHT?
I'LL CUT IT IF YOU WANT, SURE.
...I HAVE TO RELY ON SOMEONE ELSE.
I DON'T HAVE ANY WEAPONS, SO...
SHE'S TRYING TO SPREAD MORE RUMORS.
I DOUBT I CAN GRADUATE WITH A PARASITE.
DO I HAVE A CHOICE?

CLANG
THEN I WON'T HOLD BACK.
PUT OUT YOUR HAND.
KUREHA!
*SEE TRANSLATOR'S NOTES
SOMEBODY SAW THEM IN THE PHYSICS ROOM TOGETHER-
...AND NOW HE'S AFTER SAKURAI-SAN!*
TOBISHIMA*, THE PHYSICS TEACHER, WAS ALWAYS FLIRTING WITH HIS OLD STUDENTS...

SLICE
ROLL
GYAAAH!
AH!
AAH!!
SHIT

はぁ.
HUFF
はぁ.
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
I..
WASN'T DOING ANYTHING.
WH..
WHAT?
HUFF

I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE
PLENTY OF PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THINGS!
I'M JUST ONE MORE!
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG!
PEOPLE ALWAYS WANT TO HEAR ABOUT EACH OTHER!
UM...
WHO... ARE YOU?
POP


I'M SORRY...
UH...
I DON'T REALLY KNOW MANY PEOPLE OUTSIDE MY CLASS...
POP
POOF

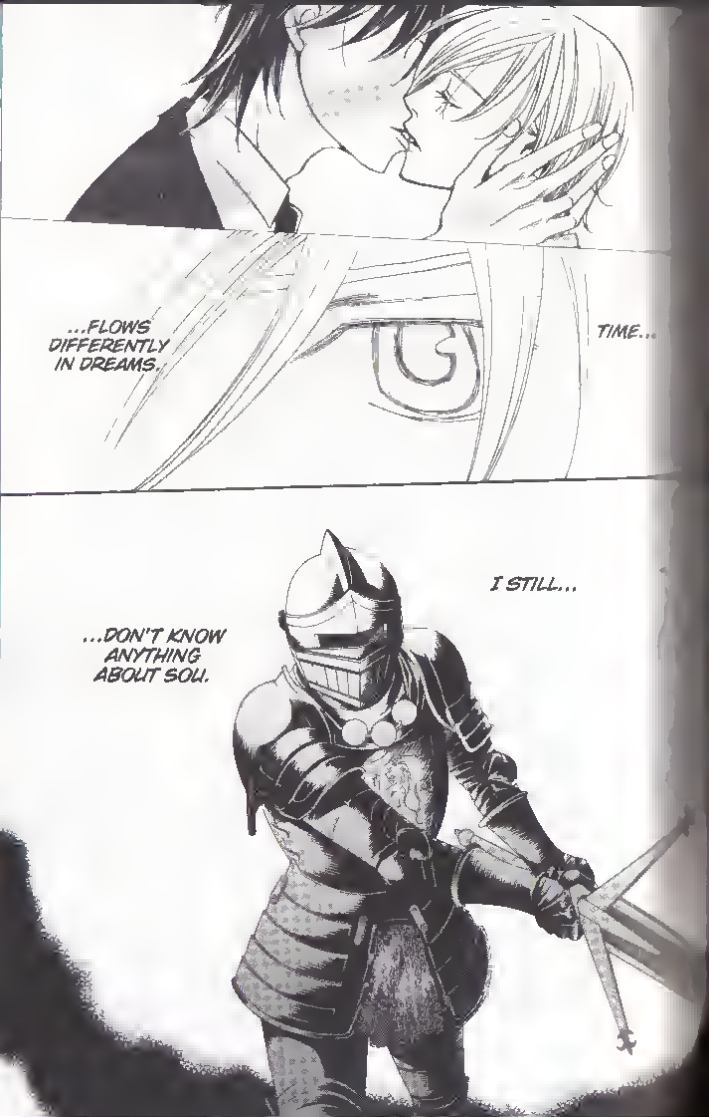
HER NAME'S EBIZAWA*-SAN.
.. IS IN OUR CLASS, MASHIRO
SHE.
*SEE TRANSLATOR'S NOTES
THE ONES WHO STAY UNNOTICED OFTEN SEE THE MOST.
I'VE NEVER SEEN HER.
SHE'S IN OUR CLASS?
THEY LIVE OUT OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES, SINCE THEIR OWN ARE SO UNREMARKABLE...
CLANG

CLANK
CLANK
SOU...?
DRAG
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!
LET ME GO!
S..
STOP IT!!
GRAB
KUROSAKI-SEMPAI!?

ALL YOU EVER DO IS PANIC AND RUN. IT'S DISGUSTING
MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL FOR ONCE
WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO...?
STOP IT!
THE POINT OF THIS CLASS IS FINDING THE KEY, RIGHT?
THAT MEANS YOU HAVE TO BE WILLING TO GRADUATE IN THE FIRST PLACE

STAB
PULL

...HMPH.
NO GOOD, I SEE.
HE'S ALWAYS BEEN USELESS.
IF YOU'RE DOING THIS FOR ME...
...THERE'S NO NEED.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE HERE OR NOT.
YOU'RE ONLY DREAMING LITTLE GAMES FOLLOWING ALL THE RULES
ISN'T THAT RIGHT...
...ICHI-JO?

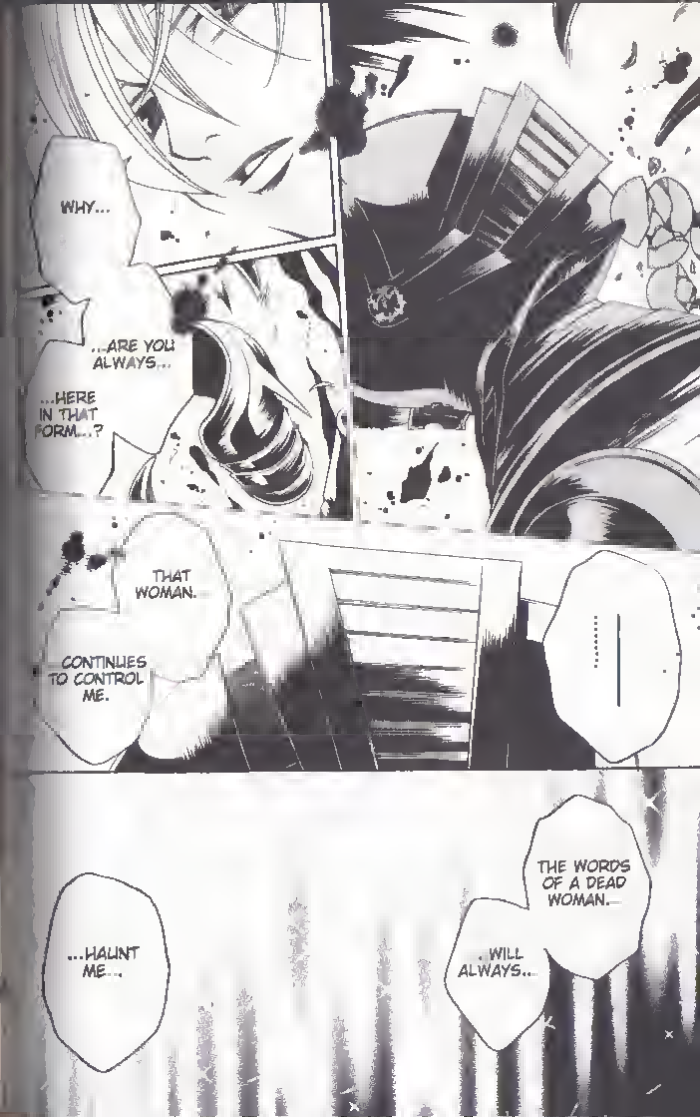

...FLOWS DIFFERENTLY IN DREAMS.
TIME...
I STILL...
...DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT SOU.

SWING
THUD

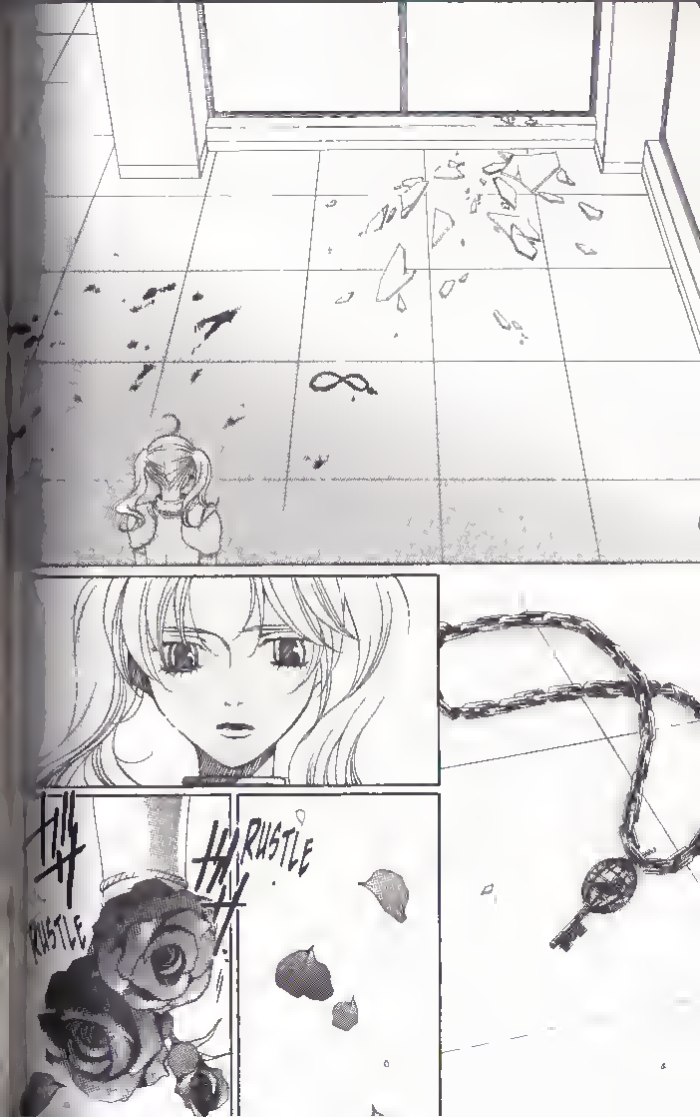
...CAME BACK TO GRADUATE.
KUREHA...
MASHIRO-KUN...
...I...
IN THAT CASE...

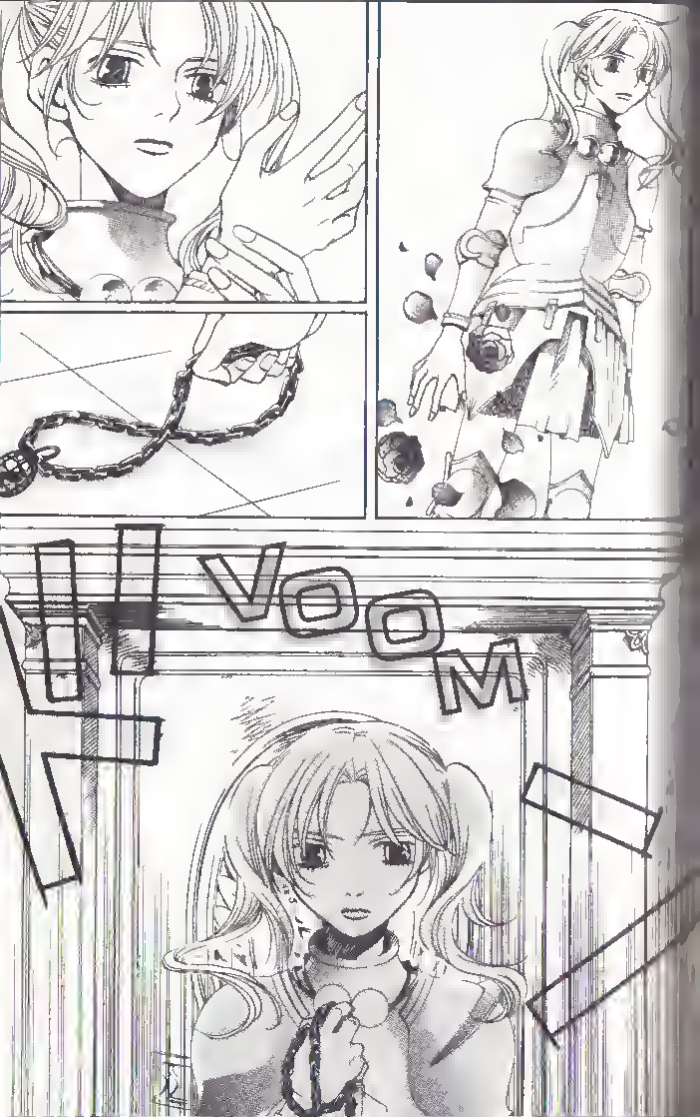
SLICE

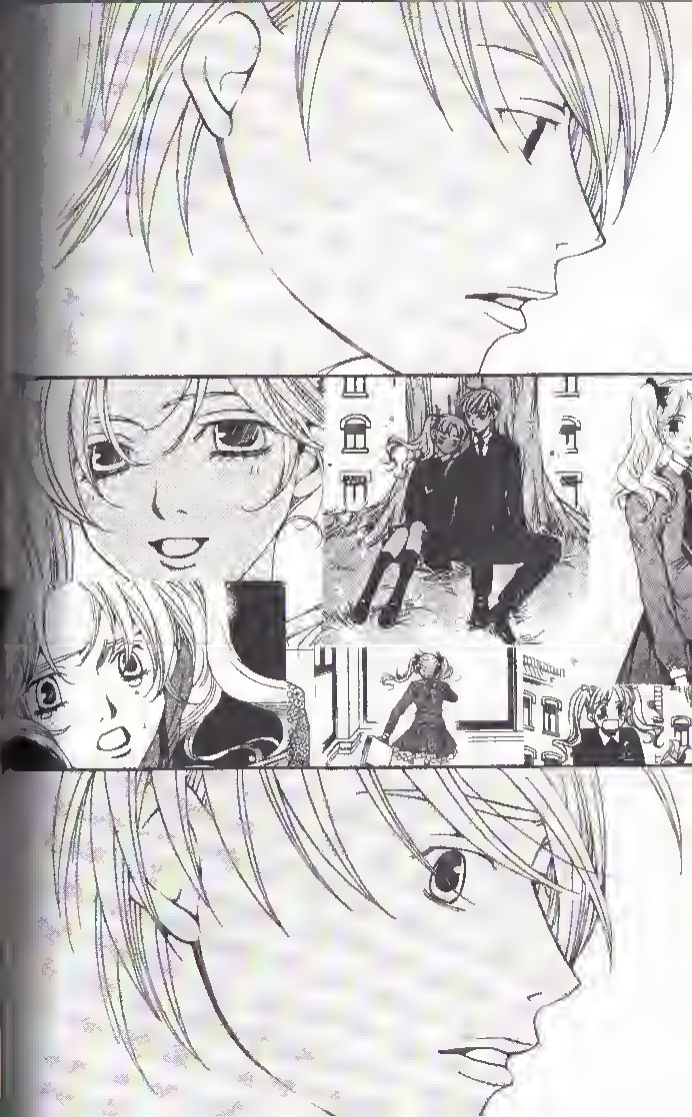
BURST

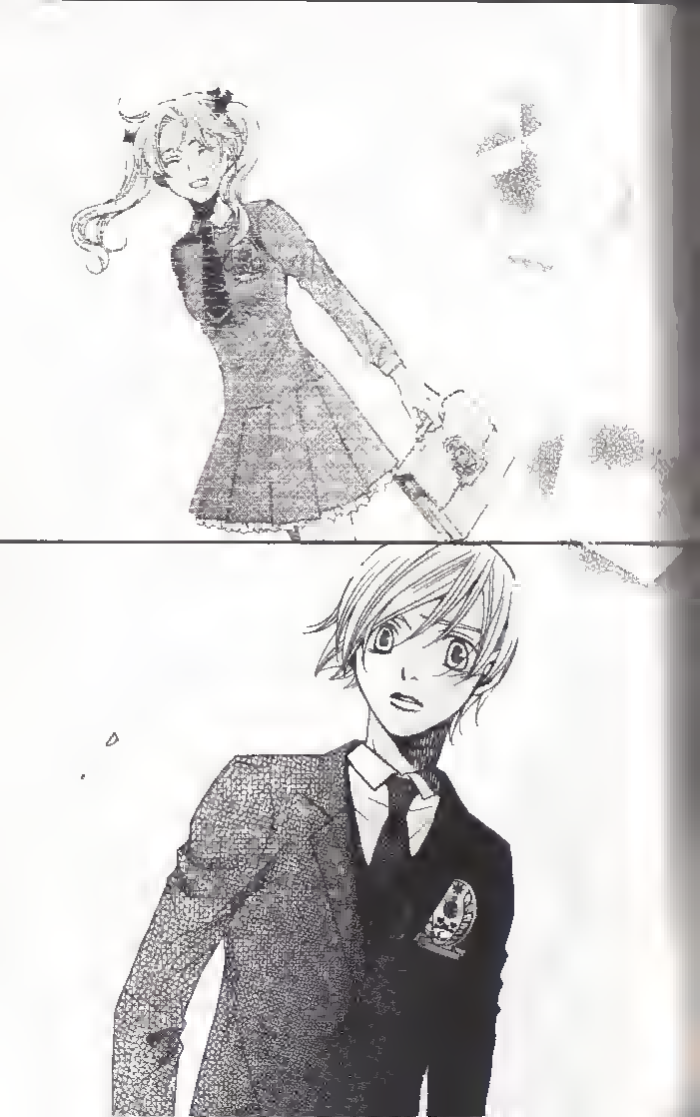

WHY...
...ARE YOU ALWAYS...
...HERE IN THAT FORM...?
THAT WOMAN.
CONTINUES TO CONTROL ME.
.....
THE WORDS OF A DEAD WOMAN...
...WILL ALWAYS...
...HAUNT ME...

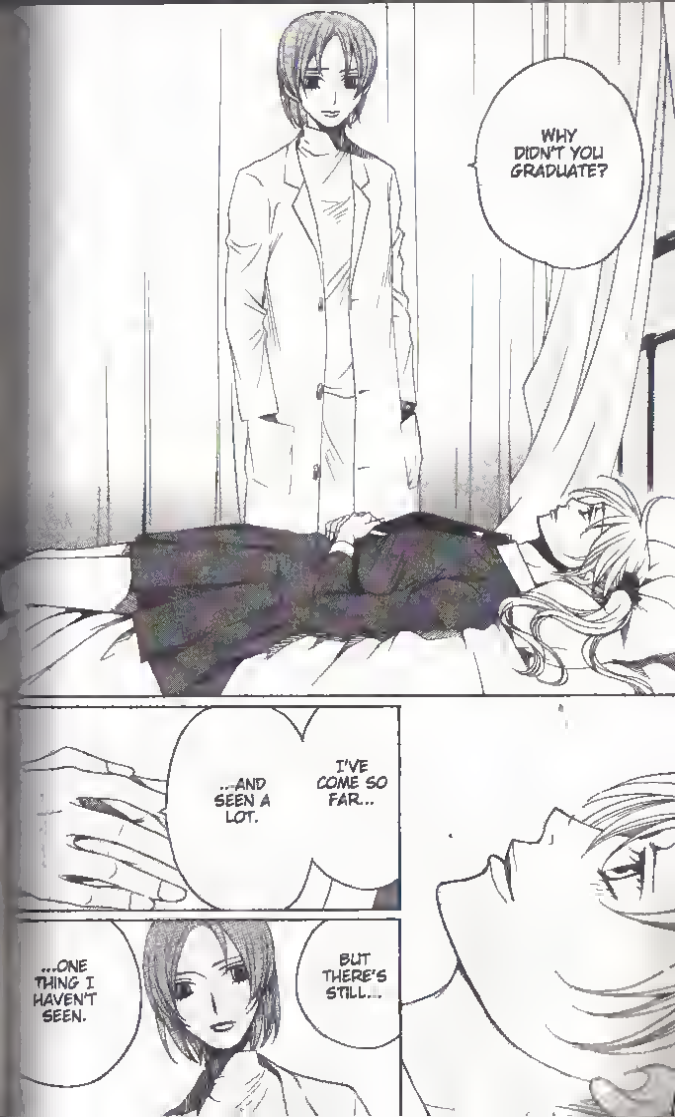
DEAD...?


RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

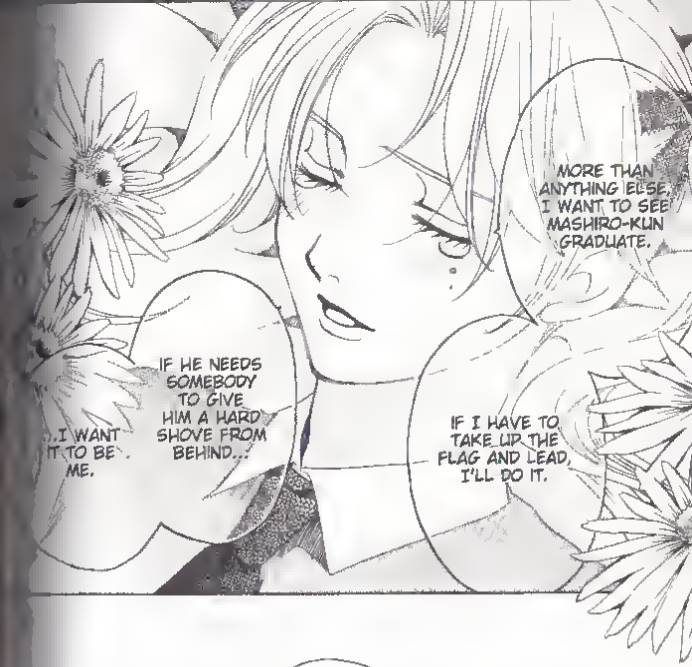

VOOM






WHY DIDN'T YOU GRADUATE?
I'VE COME SO FAR...
...AND SEEN A LOT.
BUT THERE'S STILL...
...ONE THING I HAVEN'T SEEN.

MASHIRO-KUN GRADUATING.
I CARE ABOUT HIM.
I WANT TO BE ABLE TO SEE HIM OFF.
YOU HAVE THE STRENGTH TO GRADUATE, NOW.
...BUT IF YOU LET THE MOMENT PASS, YOU MAY NOT GET ANOTHER CHANCE.
I KNOW, SENSEI.
AND I DON'T CARE.


MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, I WANT TO SEE MASHIRO-KUN GRADUATE.
IF I HAVE TO TAKE UP THE FLAG AND LEAD, I'LL DO IT.
IF HE NEEDS SOMEBODY TO GIVE HIM A HARD SHOVE FROM BEHIND...
..I WANT IT TO BE ME.

THAT'S WHAT I WISH FOR, MORE THAN ANYTHING.

Extra ASN Talk ①

■Message

ASN is finally nearing its end. When I look back at the plot that it had before it was even serialized (when the world view, character stats, and whatnot had already been established), I feel like the story's almost completely followed through as planned, and I've drawn it consistently for the most part. But the one thing that did change was some characters' names and order of appearance.

■Shimbashi —> "Aoyagi"

When I was in elementary school, there was a boy in my class with glasses named Aoyagi-kun, so that's where I stole the name from. Since there are lots of blue-oriented names like "Sou" and "Ai," I was supposed to change it. But "Shimbashi" also fits the blue pattern, now doesn't it? Yeah!

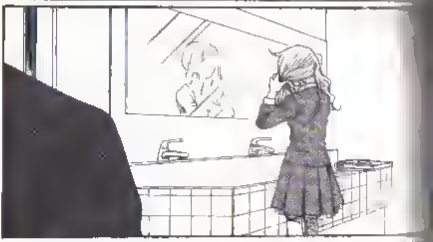
■Shimomoma —> "Kikawada"

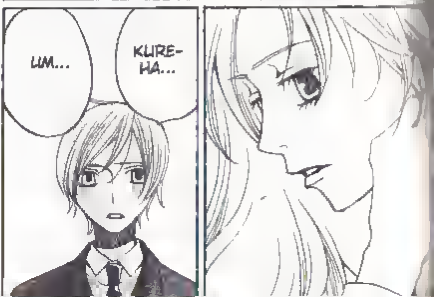
Since he's a giraffe, I thought it might be going too far to have his name have the character for "yellow" in it. Then, I went and used it for another character's name anyway. Ha!

Then, when I first established him, he was going to be a classmate in the dream world who was there from the start. He'd be the navigation guide for Mashiro, who'd tell him how the dream world worked, in exchange for one bead. He'd seem like a nice guy at first, but he'd be a character who liked making deals from the very get go!

As for why I changed my mind about him being an initial member to having a later appearance, well...

Continue to ②





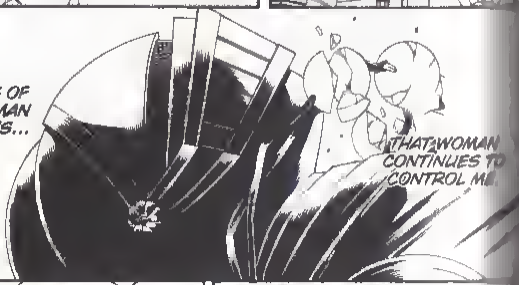
HEY, MASHIRO-KUN.
DID YOU MEAN WHAT YOU SAID BEFORE?
THAT I LOOK PRETTY AND MATURE WITH MY HAIR DOWN?
.....
YEAH. OF COURSE.
YEAH?
THANKS.

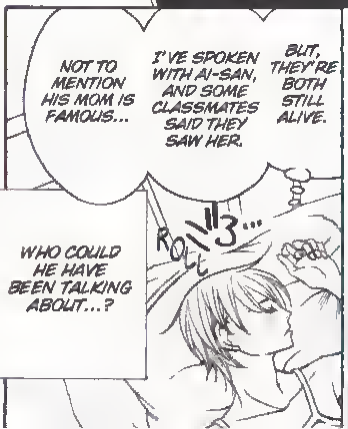
WELL.
BYE-BYE.

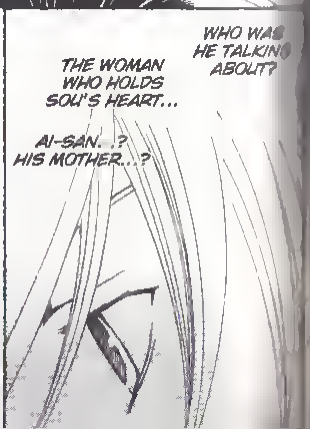
SISTER LOVES YOU BEST, SOU!
YOU'RE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO ME!

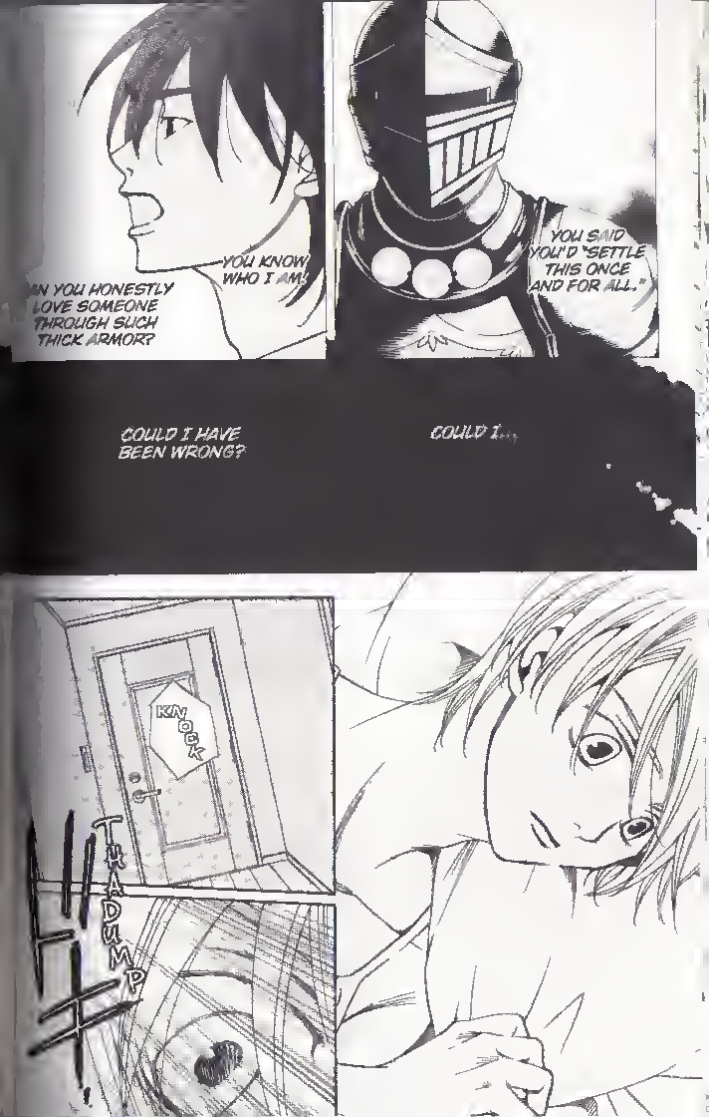
I'LL ALWAYS THINK OF YOU, SOU...
RUSTLE
GASP

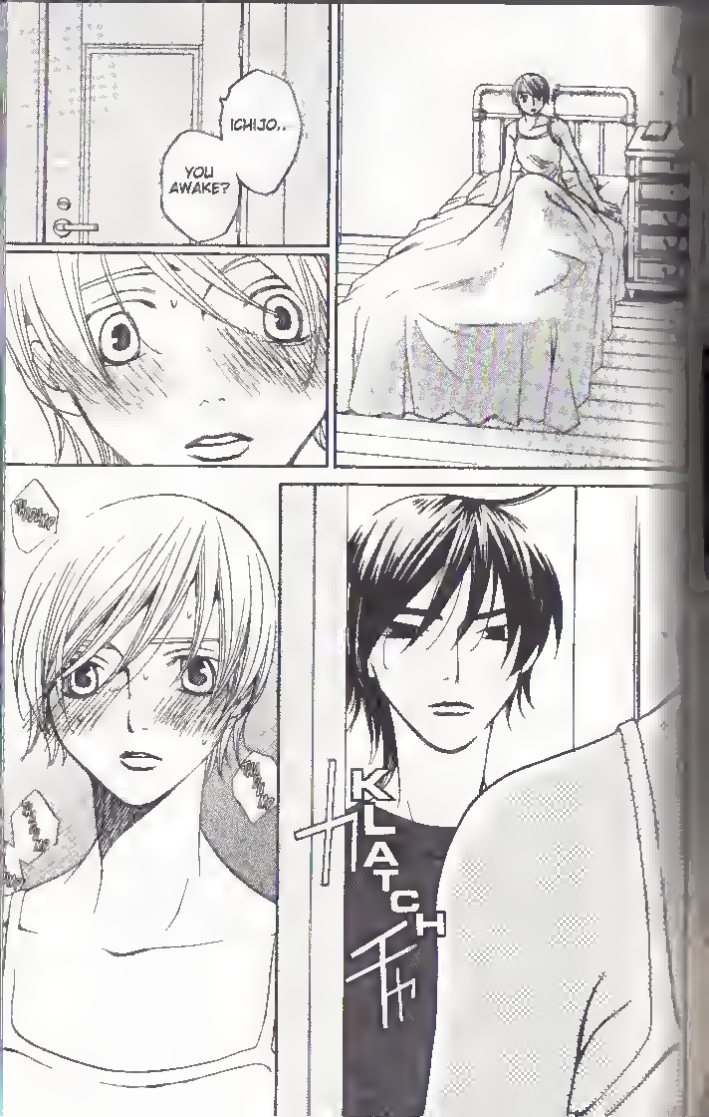
JUMP!
HUFF
HUFF
GASP!


THE WORDS OF A DEAD WOMAN WILL ALWAYS...
THAT WOMAN CONTINUES TO CONTROL ME.


NOT TO MENTION HIS MOM IS FAMOUS...
I'VE SPOKEN WITH AI-SAN, AND SOME CLASSMATES SAID THEY SAW HER.
BUT, THEY'RE BOTH STILL ALIVE.
ROLL
3...
WHO COULD HE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT...?


WHO WAS HE TALKING ABOUT?
THE WOMAN WHO HOLDS SOU'S HEART...
AI-SAN...?
HIS MOTHER...?

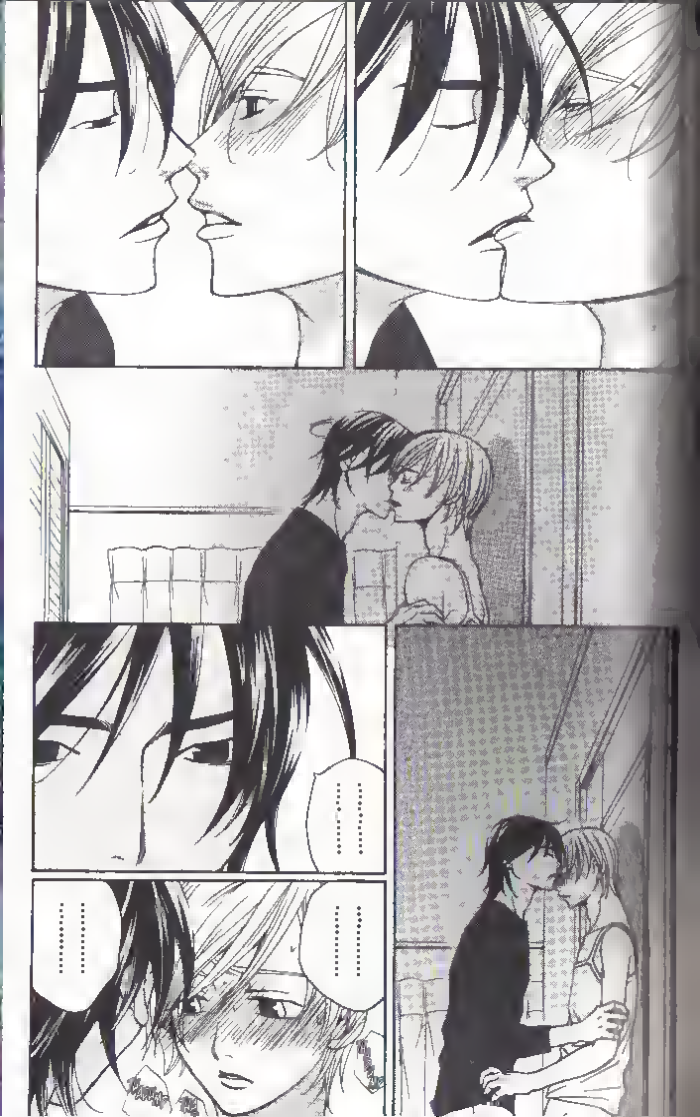

AN YOU HONESTLY LOVE SOMEONE THROUGH SUCH THICK ARMOR?
YOU KNOW WHO I AM!
YOU SAID YOU'D "SETTLE THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL."
COULD I HAVE BEEN WRONG?
COULD I...
KNOCK
THUDUMP


ICHIJO..
YOU AWAKE?
KLATCH

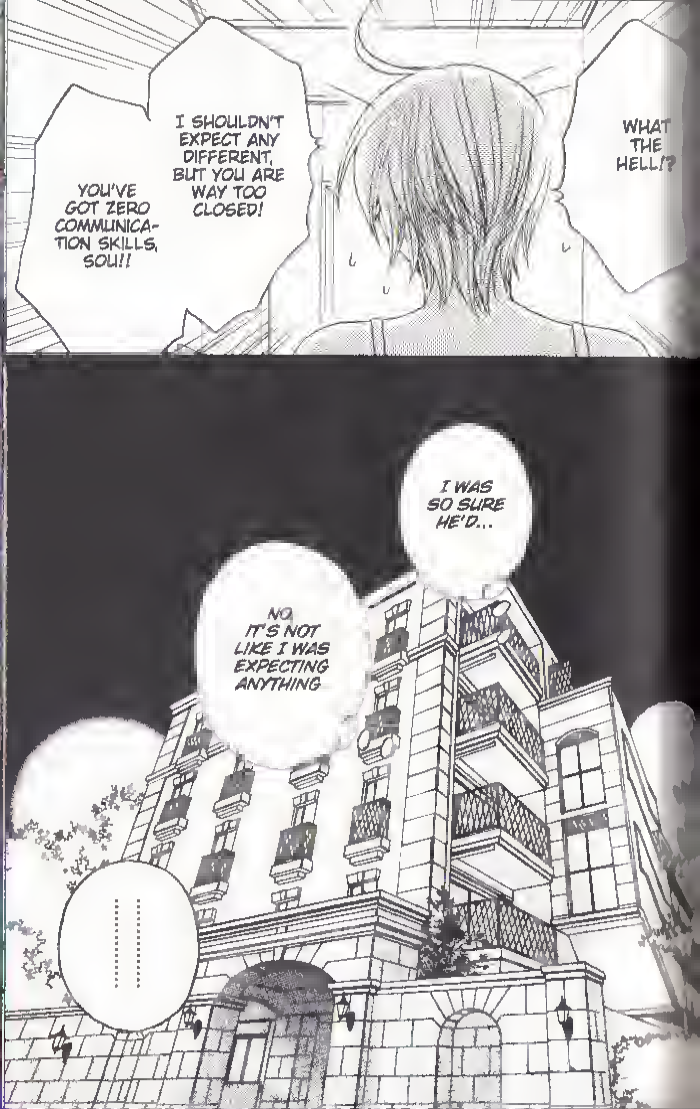
SHUT
YOU SCARED ME
WHAT'RE YOU DOING UP SO LATE?
IF YOU'RE CAUGHT AFTER LIGHTS-OUT, YOU'LL GET IN TROUBLE
WHAT.. IS IT?
SAY SOMETHING.
ICHIJO.
DO YOU LOVE ME?

I...
I DO
I ONLY HEARD YOU SAY IT ONCE.
I TOLD YOU, ALREADY.
.....
I SHOULD ONLY HAVE TO SAY IT ONCE!
WHERE ARE YOU EVEN FROM!?
.....
DO YOU THINK ABOUT ME?
WHAT KIND OF LIP SERVICE IS THAT?
—THINKING ABOUT YOU JUST NOW.
I WAS—
YES.
.....
IF I HADN'T BEEN, I'D BE ASLEEP RIGHT NOW!
You're the one who made me say it! How rude!
IT'S NOT LIP SERVICE AT ALL!!

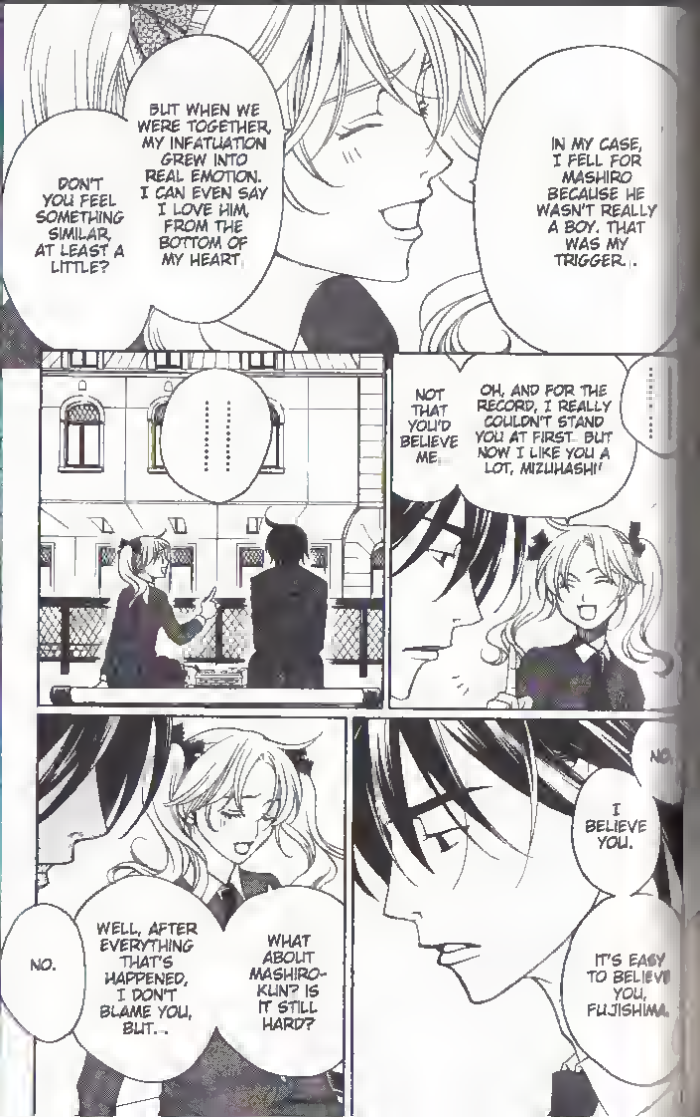
WHAT A POINTLESS CONVERSATION...
I SWEAR...
ARE YOU HAPPY, NOW?
BONK
THUD
"OW"
SHOVE


……
……
……
……

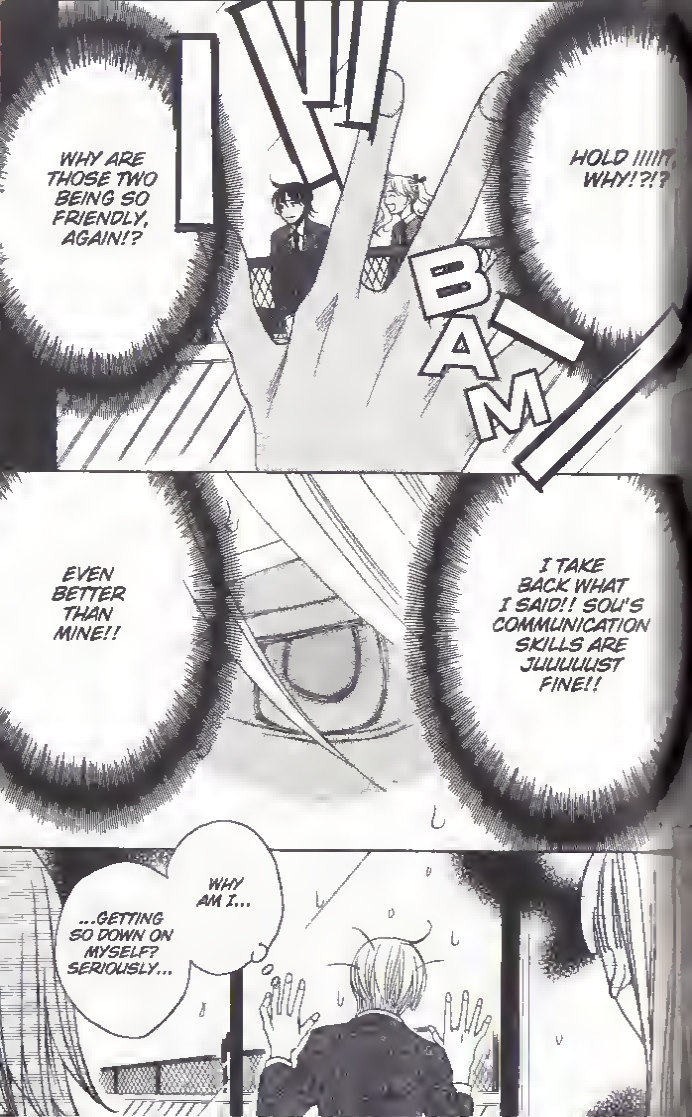
SORRY FOR BARGING IN.
I'LL LEAVE, NOW.
... HUH?
SEE YOU.
GOOD NIGHT.
.....
SHUT

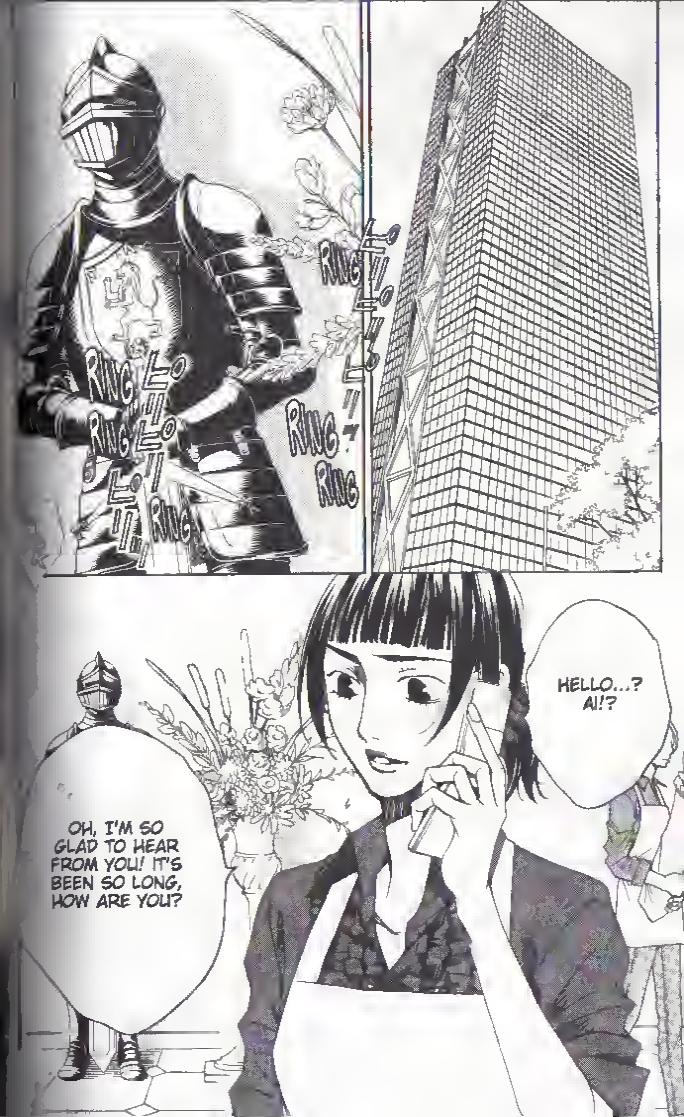

WHAT THE HELL!?
I SHOULDN'T EXPECT ANY DIFFERENT, BUT YOU ARE WAY TOO CLOSED!
YOU'VE GOT ZERO COMMUNICATION SKILLS, SOU!!
I WAS SO SURE HE'D...
NO, IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS EXPECTING ANYTHING
.....

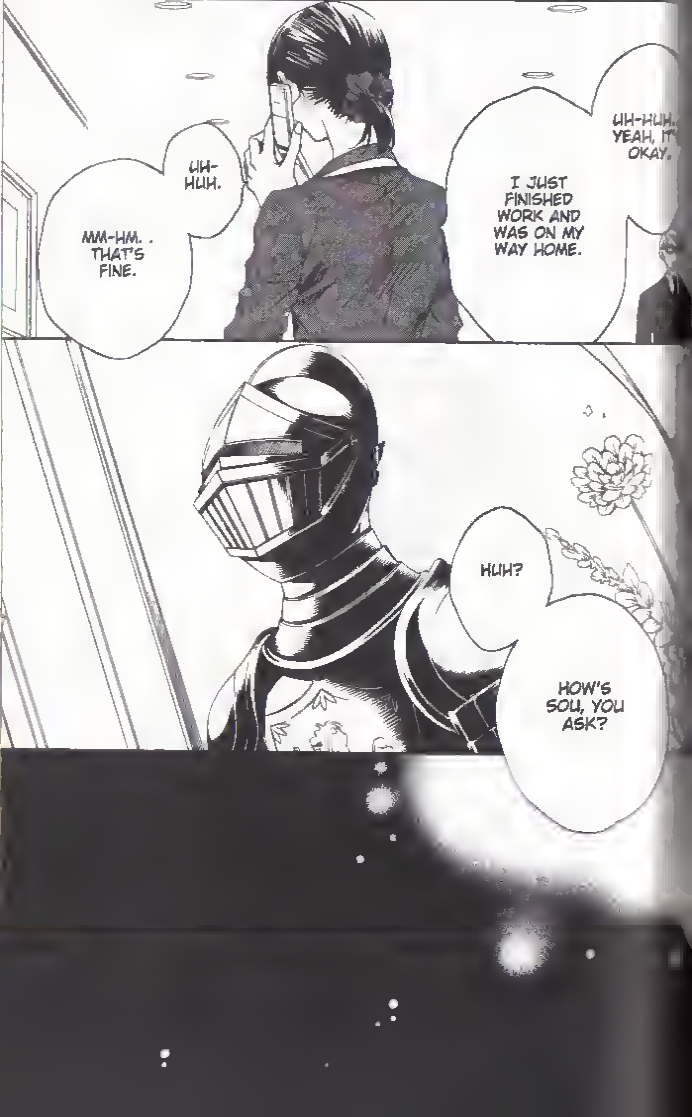
KNOWING YOU TWO, I WAS WONDERING IF THINGS WOULD WORK OUT.
AREN'T YOU GLAD IT WENT WELL?
Omigod, he's getting all shy! Ha ha ha ha!
DID IT REALLY... GO WELL?
IF THIS ISN'T PROGRESS, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS!
Whaat!?
ANYTHING CAN TRIGGER THAT.
BUT THEN, WHEN I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT WHY.
..THERE WAS A MOMENT WHEN I FELT LIKE I WAS SUDDENLY HEAD-OVER-HEELS.
WHEN I FIRST STARTED TO LIKE ICHIJO..
I DON'T EVEN KNOW...
...IF THIS IS HOW I SHOULD FEEL.

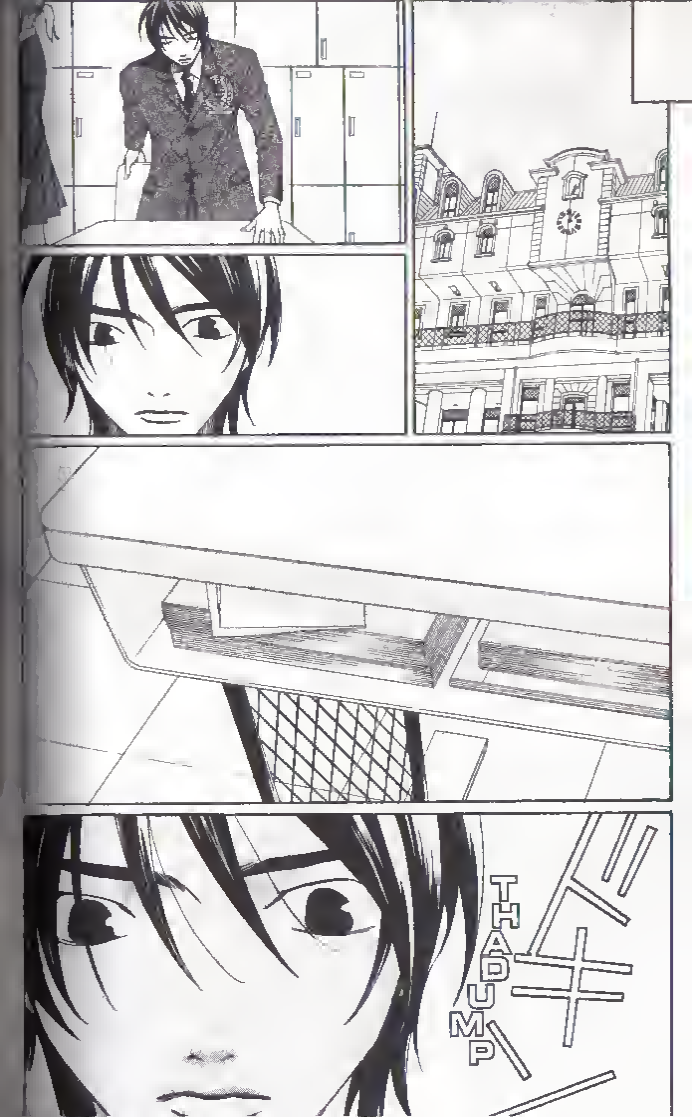

IN MY CASE, I FELL FOR MASHIRO BECAUSE HE WASN'T REALLY A BOY. THAT WAS MY TRIGGER..
BUT WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER, MY INFATUATION GREW INTO REAL EMOTION. I CAN EVEN SAY I LOVE HIM, FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.
DON'T YOU FEEL SOMETHING SIMILAR, AT LEAST A LITTLE?
.....
OH, AND FOR THE RECORD, I REALLY COULDN'T STAND YOU AT FIRST. BUT NOW I LIKE YOU A LOT, MIZUHASHI!
NOT THAT YOU'D BELIEVE ME.
.....
NO.
I BELIEVE YOU.
IT'S EASY TO BELIEVE YOU, FUJISHIMA.
WHAT ABOUT MASHIRO-KUN? IS IT STILL HARD?
WELL, AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED, I DON'T BLAME YOU, BUT..
NO.

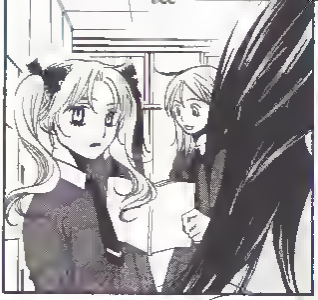
I...
IT'S NOT ICHIJO'S FAULT.
I DON'T THINK...
WHILE WE'RE AT IT, I LIKE YOU A LOT TOO, FUJISHIMA.
MIKI


WHY ARE THOSE TWO BEING SO FRIENDLY, AGAIN!?
HOLD !!!!!T, WHY!?!?
BAM
EVEN BETTER THAN MINE!!
I TAKE BACK WHAT I SAID!! SOU'S COMMUNICATION SKILLS ARE JUUUUUST FINE!!
...GETTING SO DOWN ON MYSELF? SERIOUSLY...
WHY AM I...

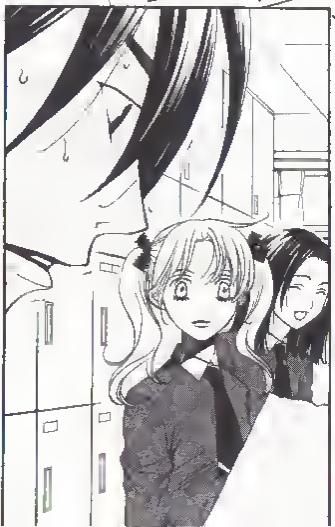

RING
RING
RING
RING
RING
RING
RING
RING
HELLO...? AI!?
OH, I'M SO GLAD TO HEAR FROM YOU! IT'S BEEN SO LONG, HOW ARE YOU?


UH-HUH.
MM-HM. . THAT'S FINE.
I JUST FINISHED WORK AND WAS ON MY WAY HOME.
UH-HUH. YEAH, IT'S OKAY.
HUH?
HOW'S SOU, YOU ASK?


THADUMP



Sou,
I can always come back to you.
Go ahead and play with Mashuro Ichijo until
you're satisfied.
Nothing's changed. Nothing will change.
You'll always think of me.



I'll always be waiting.

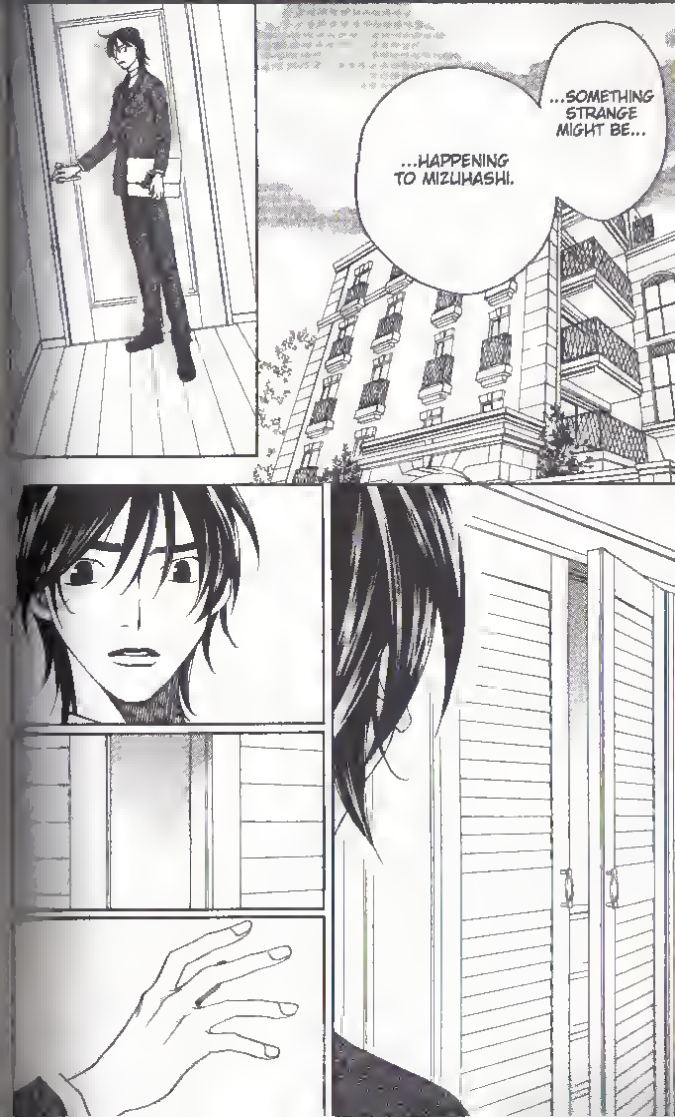
Always waiting.

CLATTER
TOSS
CRUMPLE

TURN

MASHIRO-KUN.
I WONDER IF SHE WAS SPREADING RUMORS AGAIN...
SO SHE REALLY IS IN OUR CLASS.
WHAT WAS HER NAME, AGAIN? KANISAWA-SAN*?
*SEE TRANSLATOR'S NOTES
WELL...
YEAH, WHAT IS IT?
LISTEN...
UH, MASHIRO-KUN...
...ARE THINGS GOING WELL...
...WITH MIZU-HASHI?

I DUNNO...
.....
SOU DOESN'T REALLY TALK TO ME ALL THAT MUCH.
THAT MAY BE SO, BUT...
PLEASE LOOK AFTER HIM
MIZUHASHI, I MEAN.
JUST...STAY WITH HIM, SO HE CAN TALK IF HE NEEDS TO.
.....
WHY?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
I DON'T KNOW.
I MAY BE MAKING TOO MUCH OF THIS, BUT. .
BUT IT'S POSSIBLE THAT...


...SOMETHING STRANGE MIGHT BE...
...HAPPENING TO MIZUHASHI.

BADUM
KNOCK KNOCK
SOU, YOU THERE?
IT'S ME

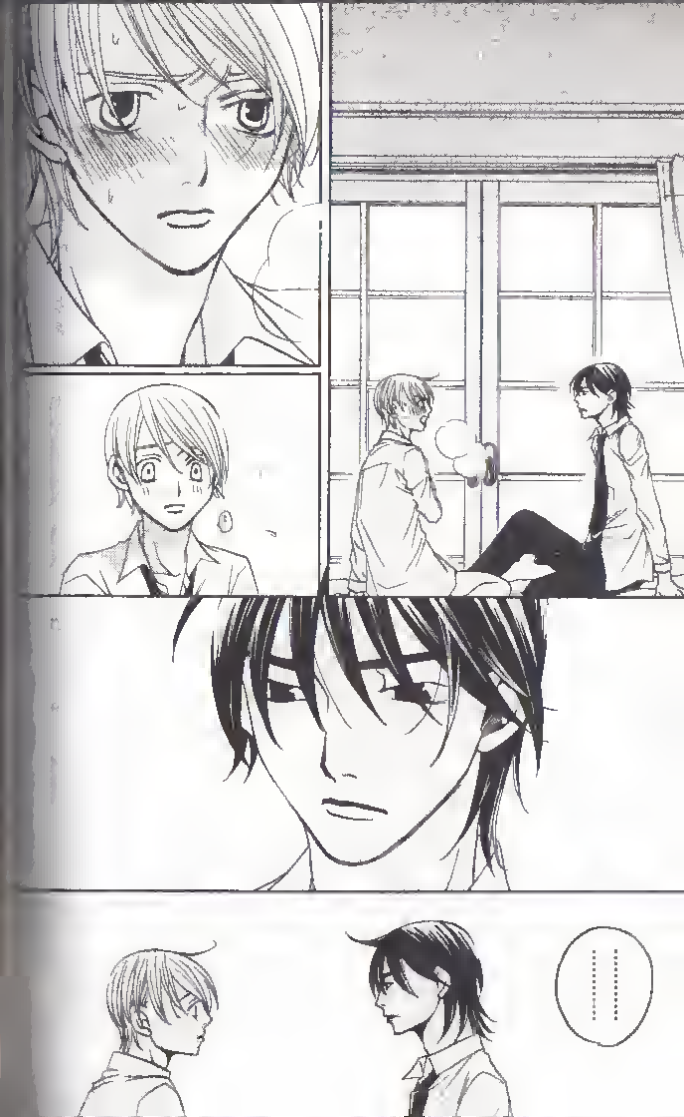
I'M A SHUT
UMM...
ERR...
UUUUUH...
WELL...
.....
OH... UH..
IS NOW A GOOD TIME?
I DIDN'T...
...COME BY FOR ANYTHING SPECIFIC.
I FIGURED MAYBE I SHOULD...
...BE WITH YOU...

WHUMP

WAIT!
I...!
BUT...
I CAME TO TALK.
I CAN NEVER GET THE WORDS OUT...!
I ALSO...
...CAN'T FIND THE RIGHT WORDS WHEN YOU'RE HERE

WAIT...!
HOLD IT...
OW!
YOU IDIOT!! YOU'RE HORRIBLE AT THIS!
WELL I WAITED, BUT THEN YOU DIDN'T SAY ANY-THING
OW! I SAID THAT HURTS!
.....
.....
JUST SHUT UP, LIE DOWN AND LET ME DO MY THING!
I HAVE, TOO! PLENTY OF TIMES!!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO SELFISH? YOU'VE NEVER DONE IT WITH A VIRGIN BEFORE, HAVE YOU!?
IT'S NOT MY FAULT! YOUR FIRST TIME IS SUPPOSED TO HURT, JUST DEAL WITH IT!
HORRIBLE

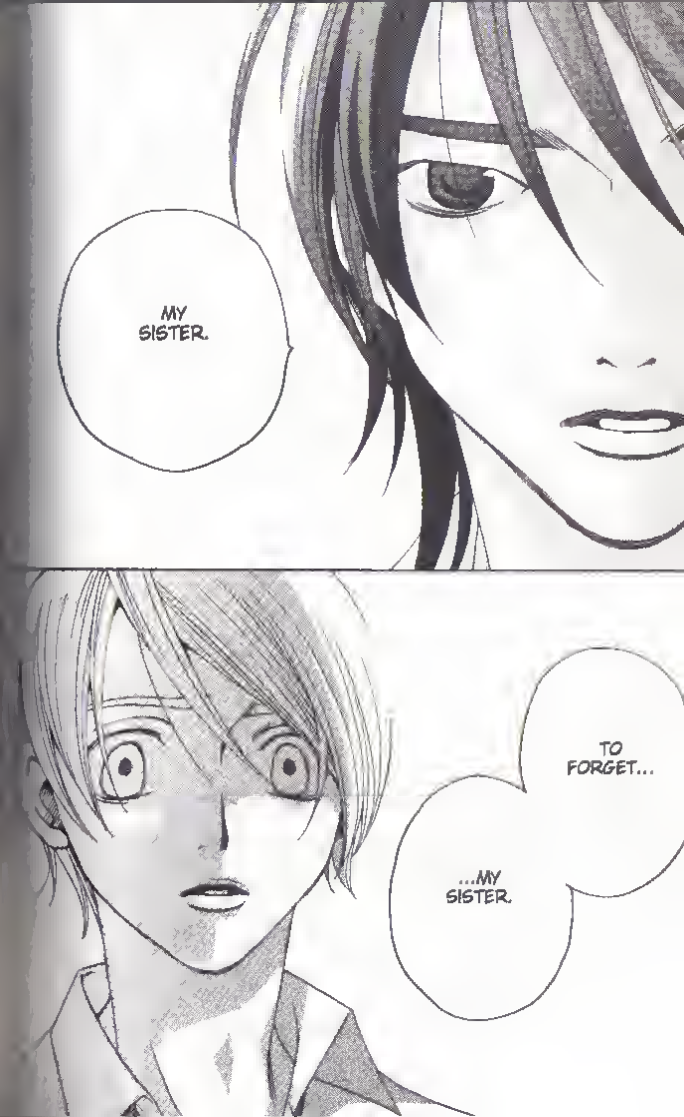
10 SLAP
Idiot!
Jerk!!
Plenty of times!?
Plenty of times!?
LIKE YOU HAVE ANY RIGHT TO TALK, PRINCESS!
THAT'S SO COMPLETELY INSENSITIVE!
YOU LOWLIN
SOU, DO YOU REALLY...
...CARE ABOUT ME!?
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS! YOU DON'T SAY THAT TO THE GIRL YOU LIKE!!



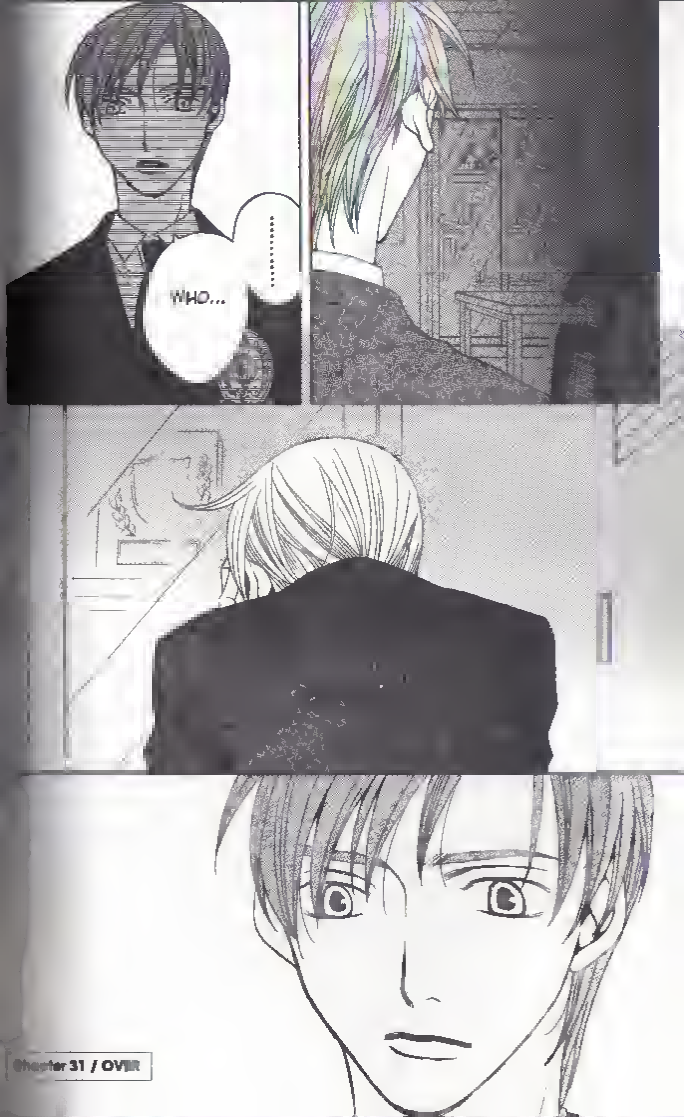
UH...
I DON'T KNOW.
I'M SORRY.
I DON'T KNOW IF I REALLY CARE ABOUT YOU...
...FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

.....
.....
...HUH?
I'M TOO AFRAID...
...TO SEARCH MYSELF THAT DEEPLY.
MAYBE... I'M JUST USING YOU...
USING ME...?
FOR WHAT?
I...
ACCIDENTALLY SAW IT.

...USE ME FOR?
WHAT CAN YOU...
HE LOOKED SO ODD AFTER HE READ IT, I THOUGHT IT WAS FROM YOU, MASHIRO-KUN.
THERE WAS A LETTER IN MIZUHASHI'S DESK.
AND IT WAS...
SO, I TOOK A PEEK.


MY SISTER.
TO FORGET...
...MY SISTER.

KENDO CLUB ROOM
CLK
CLK
#5.. RATTLE


WHO...

IS THIS MEETING REALLY IMPORTANT ENOUGH FOR ME TO LEAVE EARLY?
I AM ONLY MISSING MY HISTORY CLASS THOUGH
I SWEAR, THAT TEACHER PUTS ME TO SLEEP.

HE FELT THAT THIS WAS THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO COME INTRODUCE YOURSELF, KOICHIRO-SAN.
YOUR FATHER'S GUEST WILL BE LEAVING TOKYO, TONIGHT.
SAYING HELLO TO SOMEONE I'VE NEVER MET, THE SMILING AND THE FORMAL SPEECH...
Haah
I'M REALLY NO GOOD AT THIS...
JUST SMILE AND NOD.
BECAUSE YOU'VE NEVER MET HIM, HE'LL BE FAR EASIER TO FOOL.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
...I'M A "USELESS, NO-GOOD SON".
AND HE'LL PROBABLY JUST TELL ME...

VROOM
Group Main Building

YOU'RE LOOKING WELL TODAY.
MOTHER.

HOW WAS SCHOOL?
HM? OH, NOTHING NEW.
JUST THE USUAL.
THE SAME OLD FRUSTRATIONS.
KOI-CHIRO.
SIT DOWN.
I'M SICK OF MY CLUB ACTIVITIES, BUT DAD WON'T LET ME QUIT...

KOICHIRO.
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
I WON'T BE AROUND MUCH LONGER. I HAVE TO DEPEND ON YOU.
DO AS YOU'RE TOLD.
LISTEN TO WHAT YOUR FATHER TELLS YOU.
THE SURGERY WAS A SUCCESS, SO YOU CAN GO HOME SOON...
DON'T TALK LIKE THAT, MOM.
YOU'LL BE AROUND FOR A LONG TIME.
I'M SERIOUS, KOICHIRO.

I NEED YOU TO BE READY.
SINCE I WILL NO LONGER BE HERE ..
...YOU NEED TO GROW UP STRONG AND SUPPORT YOUR FATHER..
...AND PROTECT THE COMPANY.

I CAN'T.
I'M NOT CUT OUT FOR THAT. .
JUST START WITH A SIMPLE JOB AT ONE OF OUR SUB-COMPANIES
IF YOU LISTEN TO WHAT YOUR FATHER TEACHES YOU, SOON ENOUGH IT'LL SINK IN.
MANAGING A HUGE COMPANY...
GETTING PEOPLE TO LISTEN TO ME...
YOU CAN DO IT A LITTLE AT A TIME.
I BELIEVE 100% IN YOUR FATHER.
BUT...
I DON'T HAVE THE INTUITION OR STRENGTH TO IMAGINE THE FUTURE. I JUST CAN'T...
DON'T THINK OF YOURSELF THAT WAY!

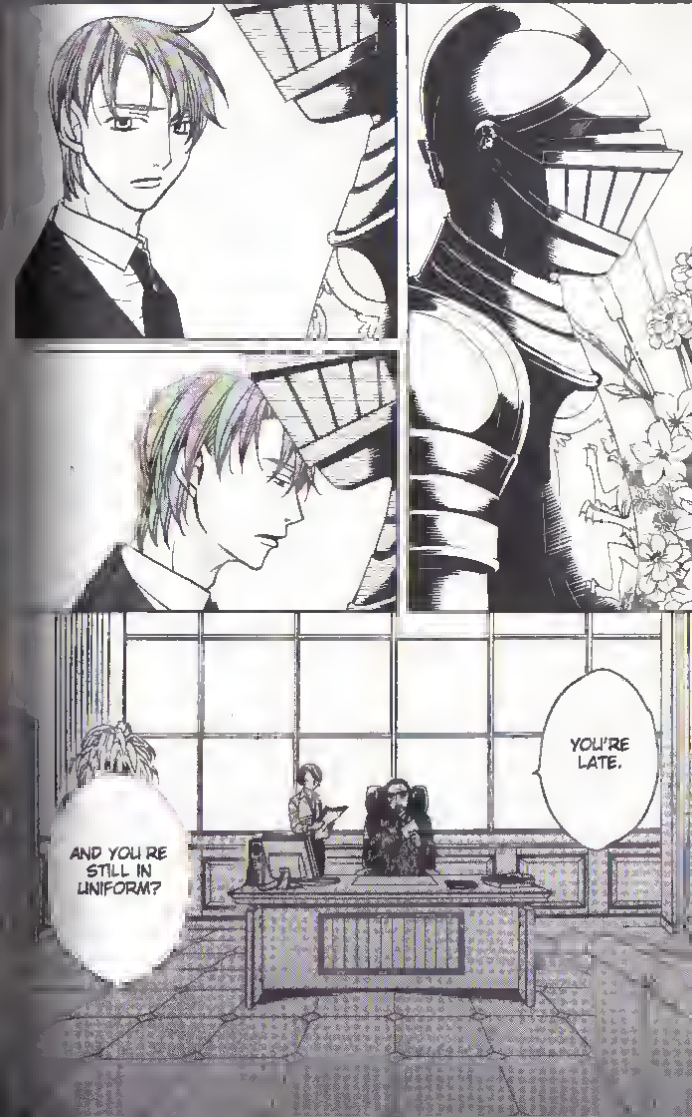
YOU SHOULD THINK OF YOURSELF AS BEING STRONG.
ENOUGH WITH THESE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS.
FOCUS ON BEING THE PERSON YOU WANT TO BE!
BELIEVE IN YOUR FATHER, AND DO AS YOU'RE TOLD.
NEVER FORGET.
EVEN WHEN I'M NOT AROUND, ENGRAVE THIS IN YOUR HEART.
YOU'LL GROW UP STRONG, I KNOW IT...

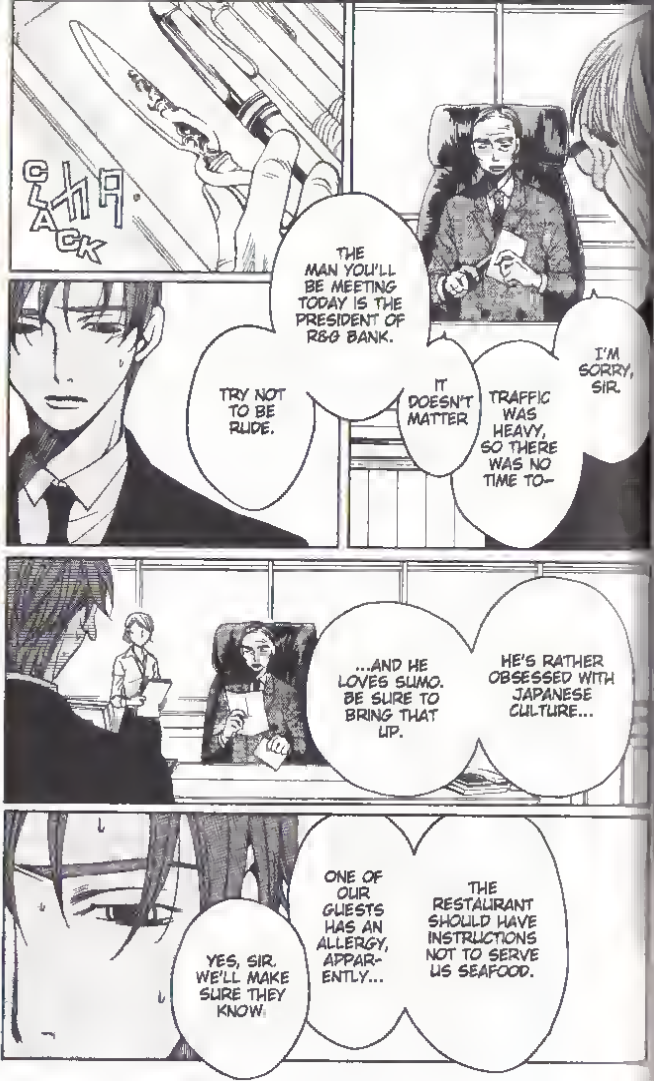
46

T. TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

HAIJIMA-SAN*...
MY...
..STOMACH HURTS..
THERE'S NO NEED TO GET UPSET.
JUST KEEP SMILING AND TAKE YOUR PLACE BESIDE YOUR FATHER.
.....
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY...
..ABOUT HIM YELLING AT YOU IN PUBLIC, KOICHIRO-SAN.

25 26 27 28
53 54 55 56
BING
I JUST FINISHED WORK AND WAS ON MY WAY HOME.
UH-HUH.
MM-HM... THAT'S FINE.
HUH? HOW'S SOU, YOU ASK?
I'M SORRY, I'M HERE.
SO, YOU WERE SAYING...
OH, I'M SORRY, WE JUST FINISHED HERE, SO WE'LL BE OUT SOON.
AH, YES.
THANK YOU, AS ALWAYS.
MR. PRESI-DENT.
KOICHIRO-SAN IS HERE.


YOU'RE LATE.
AND YOU RE STILL IN UNIFORM?


CLACK
I'M SORRY, SIR.
TRAFFIC WAS HEAVY, SO THERE WAS NO TIME TO-
IT DOESN'T MATTER
THE MAN YOU'LL BE MEETING TODAY IS THE PRESIDENT OF R&G BANK.
TRY NOT TO BE RUDE.
HE'S RATHER OBSESSED WITH JAPANESE CULTURE...
...AND HE LOVES SUMO. BE SURE TO BRING THAT UP.
THE RESTAURANT SHOULD HAVE INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO SERVE US SEAFOOD.
ONE OF OUR GUESTS HAS AN ALLERGY, APPARENTLY...
YES, SIR. WE'LL MAKE SURE THEY KNOW.

IS THE CAR READY?
YES, SIR.
OKAY, LET'S GO.
YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF MAKING THE NECES-SARY PHONE CALLS.
YES, SIR.
I'LL LOOK OVER THE REPORTS AFTER I GET BACK.
HEY.
LET'S GO, KOICHIRO.
WHAT?
..NO.
CURSE
CURSE

I'M SICK OF GOING TO THESE DINNERS WITH YOU!
YOU IDIOT!!
YOU ARE NOT GOING TO THESE DINNERS WITH ME.
THIS IS NOT A SOCIAL EVENT, THIS IS WORK!

BANG
KOICHIRO!!
YANK
ENOUGH OF THESE CHILDISH-
KOICHIRO-SAN!!
GLARE
GLARE

SHOVE
CRASH
THUD

KOICHIRO-SAN!!
WHAT HAPPENED? SHOULD I CALL AN AMBU-LANCE!?
TMP TMP
NO, HE'LL BE OKAY.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM.
RUSTLE
HUFF
HUFF

TAKE DEEP BREATHS.
KOICHI SAN.
IT'LL BE OKAY.

BELIEVE IN YOUR FATHER, AND DO AS YOU'RE TOLD.

YOU'LL GROW UP STRONG, I KNOW IT...

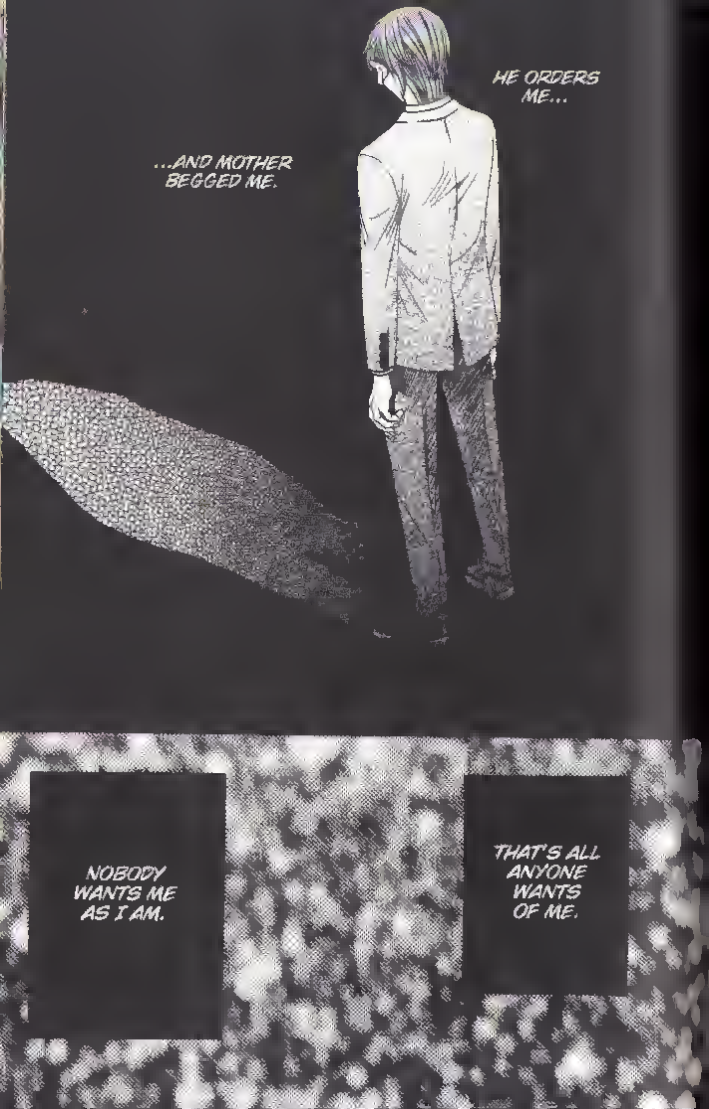
BUT, MOM...

THAT'S NOT THE REAL ME.

SO, HOW CAN THAT BE THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

RATTLE
ETSUKO!
BUMP
ETSUKO!

WHAT I TRULY AM IS USELESS.
I SHOULD JUST DIE.
THEY DON'T NEED AN INDECISIVE, UNASSERTIVE, NARROW-MINDED GUY LIKE ME.
I HAVEN'T AN OUNCE OF WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A LEADER.
I HAVE NO CONFIDENCE.
WHETHER I'M A FAKE...
...OR LIKE A TOY SOLDIER FOR MY FATHER TO MOVE AS HE WISHES.


HE ORDERS ME...
...AND MOTHER BEGGED ME.
NOBODY WANTS ME AS I AM.
THAT'S ALL ANYONE WANTS OF ME.

IF THE ONE WHO GAVE ME LIFE WANTS THE REAL ME TO DIE...
...THEN ALL I CAN DO IS DIE.

IF YOU KEEP YOUR EYES DOWN LIKE A COWARD, YOU'LL MISS ALL THE NUANCES.
NOBODY'LL FOLLOW SOMEONE LIKE THAT.
FIRST, STICK YOUR CHEST OUT.
STRAIGHTEN YOUR BACK.
KEEP YOUR HEAD UP.
KEEP THAT IN MIND WITH EVERYTHING YOU DO.
YOU NEED TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO EARN THE TITLE "PRESIDENT".
IF YOU'RE NOT STANDING AT THE TOP, YOU'LL NEVER SEE THE WORLD AROUND YOU.
YOU MUST ALWAYS SPEAK CALMLY ABOUT THINGS FROM A MORE COMPOSED AND OBJECTIVE POSITION THAN WHOMEVER YOU'RE SPEAKING TO.
BUT IF YOU ONLY USE YOUR HEAD, YOU WON'T GET ANYWHERE WITH THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE OUT THERE.
YOU HAVE TO SPEAK WITH A BALANCE OF EMOTION AND LOGIC.

WHEN SOMEONE MAKES A MISTAKE, DON'T DWELL ON IT, BUT TAKE IT AS A CHANCE TO EXERCISE YOUR LEADERSHIP AND STRENGTH.
IF YOU DO THAT, YOU'LL BE RESPECTED. IF NOT, YOU'LL BE HATED.
WHEN SOMEONE FAILS, LISTEN TO THEM AND SPEAK AS THOUGH YOU'RE ON THEIR SIDE.
IF YOU DEMONSTRATE YOUR STRENGTH AND GENEROSITY, SUBORDINATES WILL GATHER BELOW YOU AS WILLINGLY AS SHEEP.
AND THEN...
SEMPAI, YOU'RE MY ROLE-MODEL.

I'M SORRY, HAIJIMA-SAN.
I GOT YOU IN TROUBLE, AGAIN...
IT'S FINE
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
I'M OKAY...
I WONDER IF MY DAD'S FINALLY GIVEN UP ON ME...
.....
I'M SURE HE'S THINKING TO HIMSELF...
..."SO MUCH FOR INTRODUCING HIM. WHY DO I EVEN TRY?"

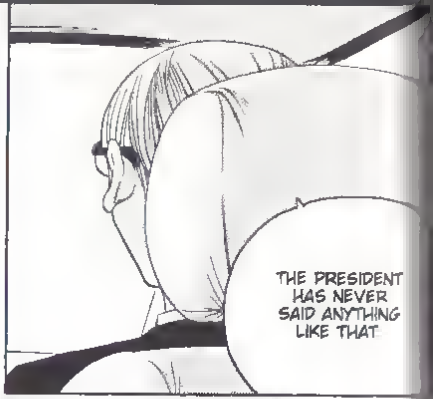
Extra ASN Talk ②

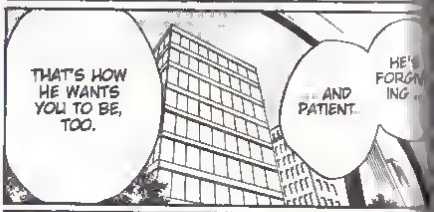
■(Continued from ①):
In the magazine issue that had the preview page for ASN before it was even serialized, there was a strong tagline that went "A hair-raising horror..!" That got me thinking! Oh, that's right. This is supposed to be a horror manga, so I'd better draw it that way. And so in haste I planted the idea of horror in my head and drew the uniform image of the initial dream world members with more horror-like qualities. As a result, those giraffe eyes that always give off a warm and fuzzy feeling were saved for later. That's why the mermaid, and her more fairytale-like(?) air also came for later. Incidentally, that line about the series being a "hair-raising horror" never made it to the final cut (ha)

■Asuka Sue ⟶ Yukari
Much like the giraffe I spoke about, she was also saved for later and had a name that sounded more mature in her initial development. But I felt that she could use a stronger sounding name and changed it. I really like fairy tale elements so I wanted to draw the mermaid princess right away. Keeping that in mind, I actually wrote the story to introduce her sooner, but just before the final cut she disappeared—poof—like a bubble (ha)

When I finally gave drawing the mermaid a stab I realized it was hard to draw all her jewelry and scales all the time. (ha)

Though it's still fun





SO, WHAT? HE'S DOING THIS OUT OF LOVE?
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S A LITTLE UNLIKELY?
I THOUGHT HE'D USED UP ALL HIS LOVE ON HIS COMPANY AND HIS MARRIAGE.
MY MOM ONLY HAD EYES FOR MY DAD.
SHE ONLY SAW ME...
...AS A PUPPET TO WORK FOR MY FATHER.

I WONDER WHAT'S GOING TO CHANGE AFTER THIS.
I WONDER IF I'LL JUST SMILE AND SMOOTH IT OVER, LIKE HE WANTS.
AND EVENTUALLY THE ARTIFICIAL ME WILL CAPTURE...
...AND KILL THE REAL ME.
THAT'S WHAT MY MOM WANTED.
AND WHAT MY DAD'S WAITING FOR.
AND YOU TOO, HAIJIMA-SAN.
BUT, I...
.....

I DON'T WANT TO DIE.
EVEN IF NO ONE KNOWS THE REAL ME, I DON'T WANT TO DISAPPEAR.
AFTER ALL, I CAN'T STOP ANY OF THIS...
...EVEN THOUGH...
I HATE IT SO MUCH.

I THINK YOU'RE A FINE ACTOR, KOICHIRO-SAN.
YOU MAKE YOUR ENTRANCE AS A CALM, CONFIDENT MAN.
YOU'RE DOING WELL IN SCHOOL, TOO.
IT'S MERELY THAT THE PRESIDENT IS VERY STRICT...
...SO HE SEES RIGHT THROUGH YOU, AND POINTS OUT YOUR FLAWS.
YOU'RE DOING FAR BETTER THAN YOU THINK.

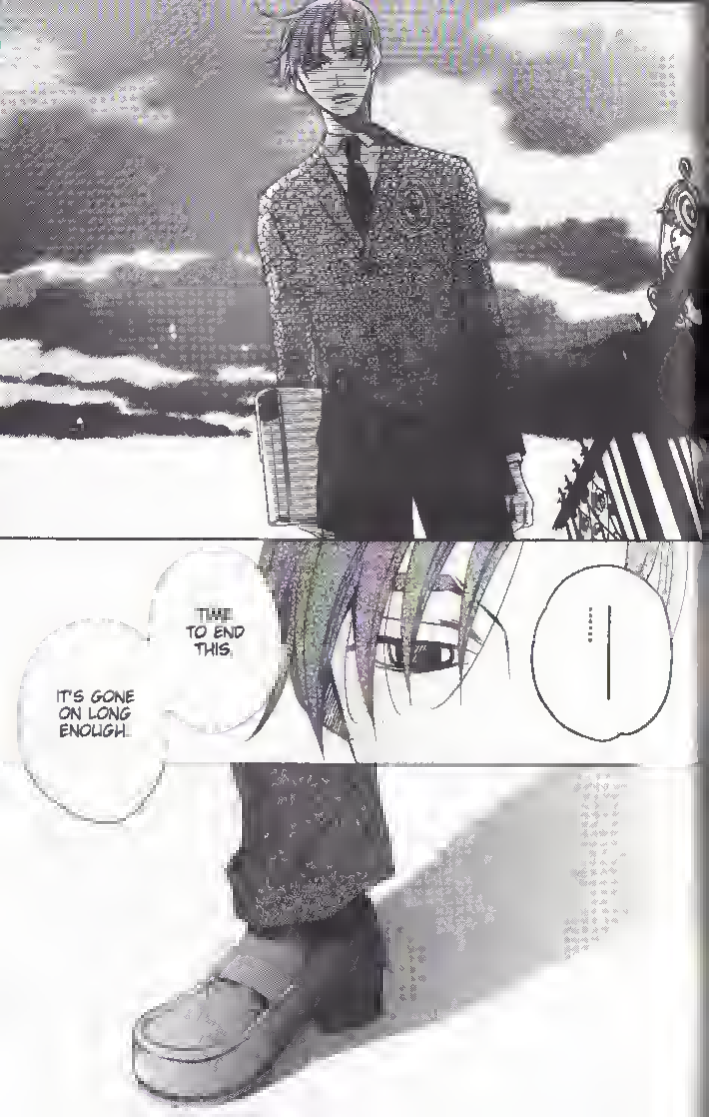
IF I EVER DO INHERIT THE COMPANY, I'M GIVING YOU A PIECE OF IT.
YEAH.. YOU'RE RIGHT.
IN FACT, WHY DON'T YOU JUST TAKE OVER?
Yeah, let's do that. Man, that makes me feel a whole lot better
SHE'S TOO FAINT OF HEART.
Ha ha IF MY WIFE HEARD THAT, SHE'D KEEL OVER.

IF YOU'RE JUST GOING HOME, I COULD DROP YOU OFF AT THE DORMS.
IS HERE GOOD?
IT'S OKAY.
I'M GOING TO STOP BY THE CLUB ROOM

EVEN IF IT'S NOTHING I DON'T MIND.
IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, PLEASE CALL ME.

HAIJIMA-SAN.
YOU'VE GOTTEN MORE GRAY HAIRS.
THOUGH I'M NOT THAT YOUNG, ANYMORE.
IT'S ACTUALLY PRETTY APPROPRIATE FOR MY AGE
Hahaha!
YEAH?
I SUPPOSE THAT'S SOMETHING I INHERITED.
I'M SORRY...

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, KOICHIRO-SAN.
WELL.
I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE.
SHUT


IT'S GONE ON LONG ENOUGH.
TIME TO END THIS.
.....

RATTLE
KENDO CLUB ROOM
WHO...
.....

...OH.
I'M SORRY.
I DIDN'T THINK ANYBODY'D BE HERE THIS LATE...
...WHEN I GOT HERE, I JUST WASN'T UP FOR IT.
I WANTED TO COME PRACTICE A BIT, MAYBE CALM MY NERVES, BUT...
YOU ALWAYS SEE ME...
...AT MY WORST, SEMPAI.

.....
MAYBE IT'S KARMA.
WHAT I'D ALWAYS DONE.
...IS COMING RIGHT BACK AT ME.
KUROSAKI-SEMPAI...
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN USED BY SOMEONE YOU LOVED?
I USED TO... USE A GIRL I LIKED WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING IT.
BUT SHE..
...TOLD ME IT WAS OKAY

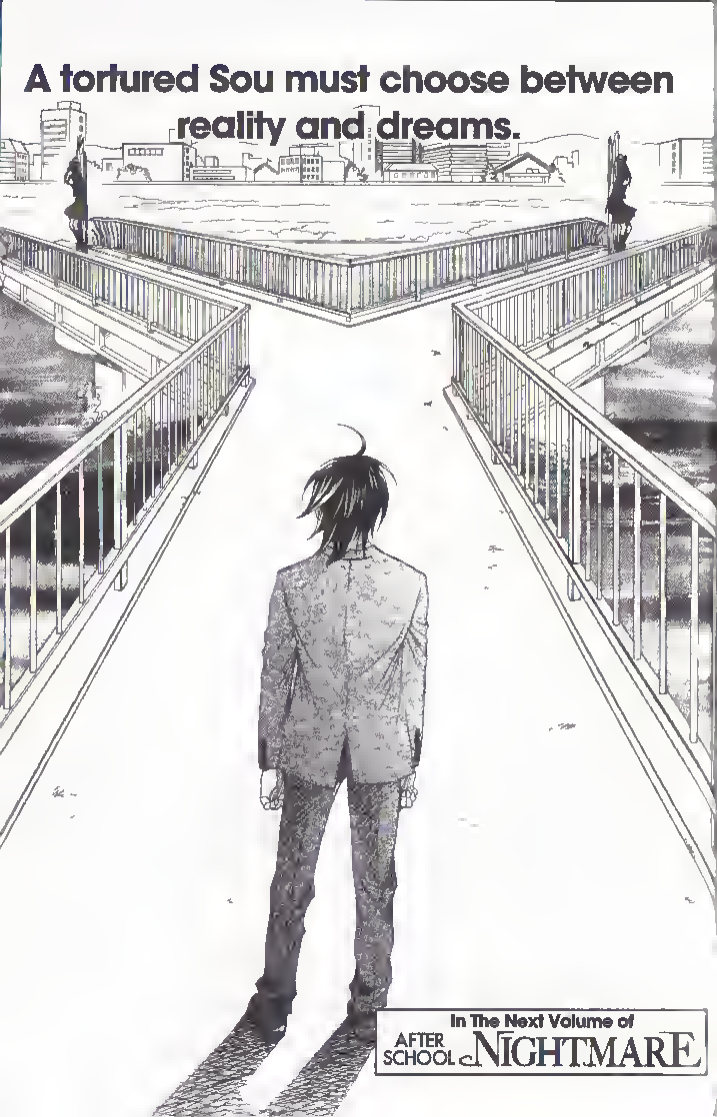
NOW I KNOW HOW MUCH IT MUST HAVE HURT.
NOW THAT IT'S HAPPENING TO ME...
...I CAN'T IMAGINE BEING OKAY WITH IT.
I HATE YOU.

I HATE YOU.
IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT FOR BEING STUPID ENOUGH TO FALL FOR IT. YOU'RE NOT FOOLING ANYONE.
WHOEVER SAID THEY WERE USING YOU WAS RIGHT.
I CAN'T STAND PEOPLE LIKE THAT.

THOSE TEARS JUST PISS ME OFF.
CLANG
CLANG
SEM-PAI...?
CLANG
MARCH
MARCH

I CAME TO GET MY THINGS.
I'M QUITTING.
I WON'T BE COMING BACK.
TELL THE OTHERS FOR ME.
SHUT
I HOPE YOU CAN FIND A NEW LEADER.
MARCH
MARCH
STOMP

CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK


A tortured Sou must choose between reality and dreams.
In The Next Volume of
AFTER SCHOOL NIGHTMARE

Translator's Notes:

Pg. 46 – *The North Wind and the Sun*
This tale by Aesop is about the wind and the sun having a contest to decide which is more effective: brute strength or gentle coaxing. The challenge is to get a man to take his coat off. The wind tries to blow it off with a raging wind, only making the man grip it tighter. The sun gently warms the earth until it's hot enough for the man to take it off willingly. In this scene, Sou's quiet withdrawal pulled Mashiro out better than any nagging would have done.

Pg. 65 - *Tobishima and Sakurai*
More color names.
鳶島 (Tobishima) The first symbol "tobi" means "black."
桜井 (Sakurai) The first symbol "sakura" means "cherry blossom," a light pink.

Pg. 70 – *Ebizawa*
Another color name.
海老沢 The first two symbols make up the word "ebi" which means "shrimp," a pinkish orange shade.

Pg. 122 – *Kanisawa*
蟹沢 The first symbol of this name means "crab." Mashiro messed it up because he easily confused "shrimp" for "crab."

Pg. 150 – *Haijima*
灰島 The first symbol "hai" means "ash," a gray color.